

# HUMAN DEVELOPMENT

**The Jesuit Educational  
Center for Human Development**

**Burnout in Ministry**

**Sex Differences and Stereotypes**

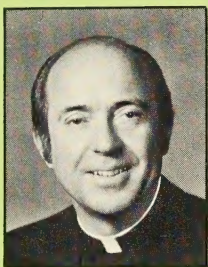
**Anger, Hostility, and Aggression**

**Coping with Stress  
(Part II)**

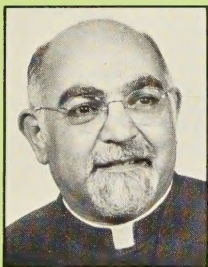
**Religious Formation  
Today**







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# HUMAN DEVELOPMENT

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Authors are responsible for the completeness and accuracy of proper names in both text and bibliography. Acknowledgments must be given when substantial material is quoted from other publications. Provide names of author(s), title of article, title of journal or book, volume number, page(s), month and year, and publisher's permission to use material.

Illustrations, if any, should be submitted as high-quality, glossy, unmounted black-and-white photographic prints. Do not send original artwork.

Letters are welcome and will be published as space permits and at the discretion of the editors. Such communications should not exceed 600 words and are subject to editing.

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# Editorial

A recent glance at our list of several thousand subscribers—representing every continent on earth and hundreds of different religious congregations, dioceses, institutions, and agencies—brought to our editorial staff a sudden, joyful realization that we are in touch, through *Human Development*, with the “whole world” to which Jesus missioned his 12 closest friends. Along with the encouragement and support we are feeling, a sense of challenge and opportunity has come over us. The challenge is to present relevant topics and ideas in a manner that appeals to readers in a wide variety of cultures, in language that is as straightforward and intelligible as it is informative and helpful. The opportunity we perceive is a chance to enter into dialogue with readers all over the world, whose reactions will soon turn this new publication into the vehicle for exchange of insights and experience for which it was designed and that we have prayed for it to become.

Perhaps no topic will ever have more general applicability than the one titled “Sex Differences and Stereotypes.” Linda Amadeo’s treatment of the theme draws attention to aspects of human nature that everyone engaged in ministry—whether among women, men, or both—should habitually keep in mind. Hardly less universal is the relevance of the second half of the article on *stress* that we began discussing in our Spring issue. In the concluding segment, we present an overview of the array of proven techniques by which people are reducing their tensions, improving their health, and extending their lives.

Closely related to stress, and to depression as well, is the phenomenon popularly termed burnout. We discuss it as an occupational hazard fraught with potentially devastating consequences for the person whose ministry brings him into contact with too many needy people. We believe the topic will have special appeal for all who are involved in forming religious workers or in people-helping occupations. So, too, will our interview with Father Paul Molinari, S.J., who repeatedly crisscrosses the planet at jet speed in his religious formation work with numerous orders and congregations. Along with his thoughts on lifelong formation, Father Molinari shares with us some highlights of the Church’s new, official document on religious formation, which,

together with Rome’s Congregation for Religious, under Cardinal Pironio’s leadership, he helped to prepare.

In this issue we are beginning a series of articles that offer an in-depth exploration of some of the concepts that behavioral scientists are able to define quite carefully, but which may require clarification for people engaged in spiritual ministries. The concepts we examine first are those of anger, hostility, and aggression. Our hope is that when a psychologist, for example, reports on his screening of a candidate for novitiate or seminary that the person is angry, hostile, or aggressive, the reader of this article will find the implications of these labels a little easier to comprehend.

To demonstrate a religious superior’s strong and constructive response to a number of alarming examples of the human destruction that stress and burnout have caused, we are publishing a letter written by Father Thomas Clancy, S.J., to all the members of the New Orleans province. We are grateful to him for permitting wider circulation of his letter, and we hope it will prompt many more of you to let us know what you are doing to improve the health and the longevity of people actively involved in ministry.

We hope, too, that the sunshine, warmth, and change of pace that this summer brings will be *de-stressing* for you, perhaps provide you an opportunity to write an article or a letter for publication in *Human Development*, but at least allow you time to enjoy the articles that we, with a great deal of pleasure, now set before you.



James J. Gill, S.J., M.D.



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# A Superior Who Cares

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## EDITOR'S COMMENT

Eight years ago I found myself deeply inspired by the action of a religious superior who showed immense concern for his subjects' health. I was not a member of his province, but his letter to all the New Orleans Province Jesuits fell into my hands.

Father Thomas H. Clancy's letter is something I have never forgotten. Through the years, many of the men from his province have referred to it within my hearing, even after he left office and took over the management of Loyola University's radio and television stations. I promised myself long ago that if I ever had a chance I would try to give his letter wider exposure as an example of how, I believe, a superior can and should talk to his or her community.

Well, I have my chance—the one I have awaited for so long. Father Clancy has graciously approved our inclusion of the letter in *Human Development*. It fits well, I believe, with our articles on stress and burnout. I hope you will appreciate its contents, its style, and, above all, its *intent*, as much as I do.

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P.O. Box 6378  
NEW ORLEANS, LA. 70114  
August 28, 1972

Dear Brothers in Christ, P.C.

By tacking this little sermonette on the end of the Newsletter, I hope that more people will read it. It concerns health. Like most men who have suffered prolonged bouts of illness, St. Ignatius put a high value on good health. Practically the last sentence of the *Constitutions* repeats what he had written many times in the body of the document: "It will also be helpful that attention should be devoted to the preservation of the health of the individual members . . ." (826).

In the past nine months the province has suffered cruel losses. Of the six Jesuits who have died, four were not yet 60 years old. The median age of the six was 56. If we look at the recent past, we have mourned no less than 11 men in five years who never saw 60. For such a relatively small group as our province, this would be alarming in any case. It is all the more shocking when we realize that our men are not engaged in hazardous occupations; we have the best medical care available, and we live in a section of the country where people come to recover their health. At a time when medical and other scientific advances are lengthening men's life expectancy, ours seems to be shortening.

Of course the ill health of many of our men is just as much a legitimate cause for concern as are the premature deaths of many of our number. To some extent we must resign ourselves to the decisions of Providence in these matters. And yet it is also our duty to preserve our physical and



mental health to the measure of which we are capable, keeping always the Ignatian mean: "Just as an excessive preoccupation over the needs of the body is blameworthy so, too, a proper concern about the preservation of one's health and bodily strength for the divine service is praiseworthy, and all should exercise it." (*Constitutions* No. 292)

It is the individual duty of each Jesuit, then, to obey this precept, and it is the obligation of the local superior to see that they do. The province policy of requiring each Jesuit to have an annual physical checkup is still in force and should be adopted by all. And yet, as I go around the province, I get the impression that the vast majority of our men do consult a doctor periodically. Something is missing. I cannot believe we are driving our men harder. Our working conditions are improving and our standard of life is rising all the time. There used to be a time when a six-day week was a fact of life. Indeed, some of our brothers have still not accepted the idea of Saturdays off. Many other Jesuits (including priests and scholastics, as well as brothers) have opted for a 40-hour week (or less). We now insist that everyone take a fortnight's vacation annually, and the rule is faithfully observed. Our diet and living conditions can scarcely be faulted. In fact, many think they smack sometimes of luxury.

Some have complained that the spirit of zeal and industry is in decline in the province. They cite the long hours spent before television sets and in cinemas and the numerous trips taken in search of "a break." It is almost as if we are taking more leisure and enjoying it less.

The most significant rise in illnesses among our men has been in stress-caused disease: gastrointestinal disorders, heart

troubles, nervous exhaustion. Perhaps the fault lies in our mental attitude. In this connection, a Jesuit of the Province has sent me a copy of a very interesting article from the January issue of *Travel and Leisure*.<sup>\*</sup> It is "Leisure—or a Coronary?" and reports the findings of a growing school of thought among cardiologists. I know the provincial is not licensed to practice medicine, but I am subjoining a copy and I would recommend it for your perusal.

It would not be difficult to stay healthy if that were our full-time occupation. It is difficult for a man on fire with zeal for the Kingdom of God to maintain the Ignatian mean quoted above. St. Ignatius once wrote to a person called to the apostolic life, "With a healthy body you will be able to do much. I don't know what you can do with one that is infirm."

Let us practice holy discretion, therefore, and above all let us try to avoid psyching ourselves out of the enterprise.

In closing, let me recommend to each of you not only a care for your own mental and physical health but for that of your brethren. We should be solicitous, too, in the care of our own sick and infirm and mindful of the souls of our departed companions.

Sincerely yours in Christ,

Thomas H. Clancy, S.J.  
Provincial

<sup>\*</sup> The article to which Father Clancy refers, by Nancy Mazer, is about cardiologist Meyer Friedman, M.D., and his theories about the behavior pattern he calls Type A. We will be discussing this concept in a future issue of *Human Development*. Dr. Friedman is a distinguished member of our editorial board.



*This is the conclusion of a two-part article.  
Part I, "The Stresses of Leadership," appeared in the Spring issue.*

# COPING WITH **STRESS** IN THE 1980s

**N**o one can escape stress; it enters our lives daily. At times we experience it in mild and brief forms—we miss a bus, have to address an audience, or have to wait on a gas line. Sometimes it is felt only to a moderate degree and can last for hours or days, as when we find ourselves overworked, playing host to a flu virus, or upset over a heated argument. In its severe form stress can plague us for weeks, months, or even years. Examples of high-stress situations include a financial catastrophe, the death of someone dear, or a disease we suffer chronically.

Some authors in the fields of psychology and psychiatry divide stress responses into two types. In Dr. Kenneth Pelletier's new book *Holistic Medicine: From Stress to Optimal Health*, he de-

scribes a Type I stress response as one that is perfectly normal, of brief duration, and usually occurring when the source of stress is immediate, identifiable, and resolvable. When such an event takes place a number of transient physiologic changes occur concomitantly. Blood pressure becomes elevated, and fatty acids, glucose, and the hormones epinephrine and norepinephrine increase in the blood. The heart works harder to pump more blood per minute, and the sympathetic branch of the autonomic (involuntary) nervous system is called into action.

As soon as a Type I stress situation is resolved, the body eases into a period of compensatory relaxation, and the parasympathetic branch of the autonomic nervous system takes over. (Its healing ef-



fect is called technically a parasympathetic rebound.) Dr. Herbert Benson has designated this mechanism the relaxation response. His best-selling book (with the same name) has helped millions to reduce the level of stress in their lives in a virtually effortless way. Ordinary physical exercise also elicits a Type I response, and each time it is terminated it results in the relaxation response that Benson, Pelletier, and others recommend so strongly for the maintenance of optimum health.

In the Type II stress response, all of the bodily changes mentioned above remain abnormally elevated for a prolonged period of time. This happens whenever stressors are not experienced as immediate, identifiable, and resolvable. Perhaps the majority of the significant stressors in our lives are of this type: vague and continuing unresolved for weeks or longer. The body remains in a geared-up state, prepared for fighting or fleeing—as if life itself were being threatened—even when the actual threat to the person's well-being is relatively minor. Since the physiologic effects are prolonged, transient blood pressure elevation can become hypertension (the forerunner of strokes), and increased heart rates can result in tachycardia (an early sign of cardiac disease). No adequate period of parasympathetic rebound is experienced to allow the vital functions to return to rest at or below their normal baseline. The longer a Type II stress response continues, the greater the likelihood that a stress-related illness will develop. Migraine headaches, heart attacks, peptic ulcers, arthritis, and strokes are all too often the outcome.

## STRESS DISEASES

The connection between emotional stress and disease has not always been as appreciated as it is now. For many years after Louis Pasteur had established the so-called germ theory, doctors and patients viewed bacteria, virus particles, and other types of microorganisms as being the simple cause of most forms of physical illness. But later scientific writers, such as biomedical specialist George L. Engel, have begun to regard the presence of germs as merely a necessary condition for disease, not the cause of it. Replacing the earlier single-cause concept is a perception of the genesis of diseases as psychosomatic or multiple-cause, which includes the full miserable spectrum from head cold to cholera. Increasing numbers of contemporary researchers, in agreement with Engel and Pelletier, are currently adopting the view that psychosocial and physical (or organic) elements together give rise to pathology.

Fitting into this modern conceptualization is a recognition of stress as, according to Pelletier, the "single most important factor predisposing an individual toward the development of disorder." But in their research, Selye and Cassell have demonstrated that the same stressors that contribute to

the harm of their passive victims are actively handled by others in ways that render them neutral or even beneficial. James Barrell of the University of Florida and Donald Price of the National Institutes of Health have also found that stressful life events (negative stressors) may well be less important than the way in which individuals deal with them. When these researchers applied electric stimuli to the bodies of their human subjects, they found that half of the participants in the experiment were confronters whose psychologic predisposition prompted them to prepare themselves actively for the stressor. The other half, the avoiders, attempted to escape the distressful situation through denial (i.e., unconscious refusal to face up to the unpleasant reality). Interestingly, these avoiders, when encountering the events that threatened them, displayed an elevated heart rate that probably resulted from fear or anxiety. The confronters, on the other hand, who actively prepared for the stressor, automatically tensed their muscles (in a way the passive avoiders did not) but did not demonstrate a similar speedup of heart rate.

The researchers believe that the muscle response is related to a normal increase in bodily activity that develops on occasions when a person needs to search out and cope with situations that involve threat. A person who, under stressful circumstances, passively or avoidingly allows his heart rate to become elevated significantly for extended periods of time is eventually likely to develop a severe cardiovascular disease. The results of experiments of this sort suggest strongly that the way in which an individual learns to manage stress is, as Pelletier states, "more critical to his well-being than any impossible and undesirable attempts to avoid stress."

## CHANGES BRING STRESS

Still, many people erroneously believe that the less stress they experience in life, the healthier they will be. Selye, whose pioneering insights into stress are known worldwide, has repeatedly insisted that the absolute quantity of stress a person experiences is considerably less important than the individual's temperament. Those who push or are forced to go against their nature (including many religious persons) are found most likely to develop stress-related illnesses ranging from chronic headaches to heart attacks, and perhaps even cancer. Research has also discovered that there are many people who deserve to be called stress seekers. These are persons thought to be addicted to the adrenal hormones (epinephrine and norepinephrine) that are secreted in abundance when stressful situations are encountered and that result in an elevated affective state (elation). It was this type of person that Selye had in mind when he told an interviewer from *U.S. News & World Report* (March 21, 1977), "If a person is a stress seeker . . . and his body is falling apart,



the last thing I would ever prescribe is that he be imprisoned on a beach for three months. He will do nothing but run up and down the beach and think about Wall Street. He might as well *be* on Wall Street and learn to accept the type of person he is and develop the disciplines that will help him live in harmony with the stress of his life."

Another important thing to keep in mind for the person who is trying to cope effectively with life's inevitable stresses, particularly if he holds an active, influential, service-oriented position, is that the individual who undergoes too much adaptation in too brief a time is predisposed to illness. It hardly matters whether the events affecting his life are felt to be negative (an injury, a rejection) or positive (a promotion, an inheritance); the accumulation of life changes over a relatively short period of time may constitute a major threat to a person's health. Recalling researcher Bett Pesznecker's observation that she and her colleagues found the best predictor of subsequent health status to be the magnitude of life change, it is not hard to comprehend the connection between the abrupt elevation of Albino Luciani to the papacy as John Paul I in 1978, and his unexpected and sudden death from a heart attack just 19 addresses and 33 days later.

#### STATISTICS CAN MISLEAD

Despite the widely publicized, innovative studies conducted by Dr. Richard Rahe and Dr. Thomas Holmes in the Department of Psychiatry at the University of Washington, which dramatically presented the relationship between the frequency of socially stressful life changes (of job, residence, loss of parent, etc.) and the onset of illness, there is evidence that calls for caution in predicting that many and frequent changes in a person's life, even within a brief time span, will precipitate sickness. This caveat emerges from a valuable research project conducted by Dr. Harold Wershow and Dr. George Reinhart of the University of Alabama who found that a significant number of patients with no recognizable changes in their lives became ill and needed hospitalization. Their findings do not negate the earlier recognition that there is a strong link between stressful life events and illness. Rather, we are taught by such work that when researchers like Rahe and Holmes statistically average their data, it is inevitable that the variability among individuals will become obscured. In other words, when Rahe and Holmes concluded that a series of changes occurring in a person's life in short succession is likely to result in illness, they may have implied, but would not be accurate in maintaining, that such a life experience must inevitably result in illness. In other words, whatever is statistically likely to happen to most people will not necessarily happen to you or me—but we would be foolish to ignore the odds!

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**Situations  
and events in the  
environment are neutral.  
They only become  
stressful when  
we appraise them  
in a negative way.**

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#### HORMONAL LINKAGE

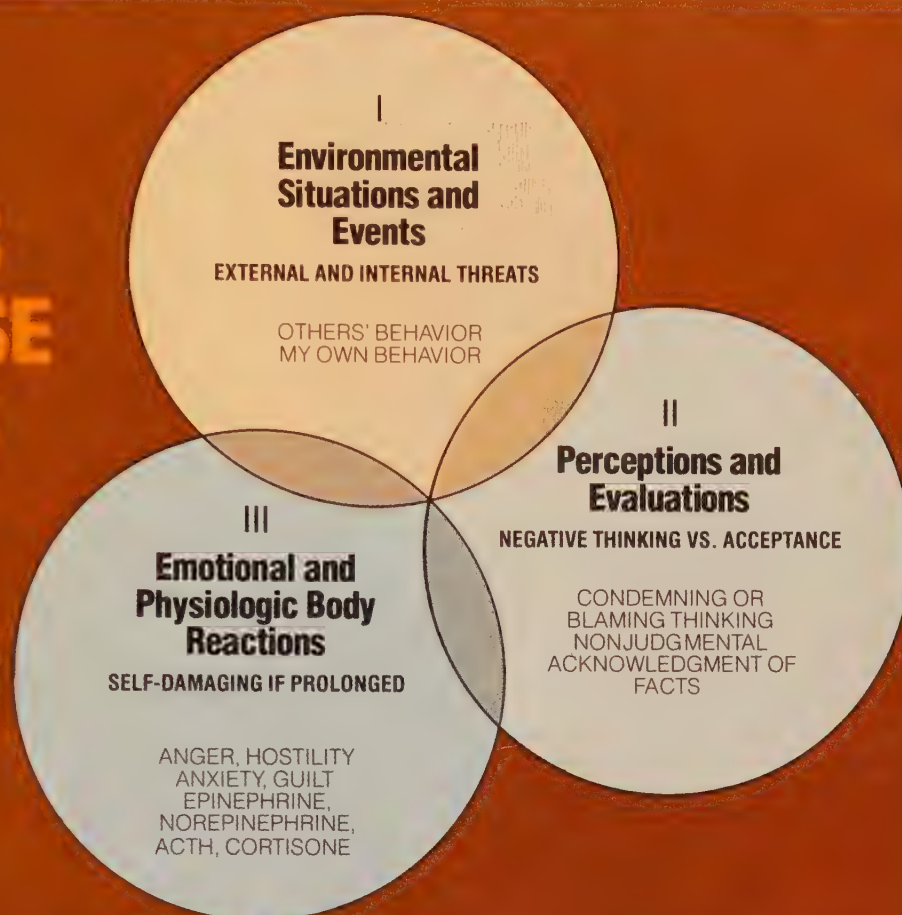
How does it happen that emotionally stressful events in a person's life set the stage for physical illness? The physiologic scenario is a fascinating but somewhat complicated one. It was Selye who first popularized the fact that all forms of stress result in the secretion of certain substances (hormones and steroids) into the bloodstream. These include epinephrine, norepinephrine, adrenocorticotrophic hormone (ACTH), and cortisone. ACTH and cortisone, which flow from the cortex of the adrenal gland, play an essential role in the body's positive adaptation to stressful conditions of short duration. But when the period of stress is prolonged, they effect a decrease in the level of white blood cells (lymphocytes) that should be available to engage in protective combat with the invading bacteria, virus particles, or other harmful microorganisms. Illness occurs when the attackers overwhelm these defenders, a very real possibility when the stress response is Type II (the prolonged variety described earlier). In other words, immunity is decreased when stress becomes chronic and the body's natural response to assault is inhibited. Even the growth of malignant tumors is currently suspected to be related to this suppression of the body's immune mechanisms.

#### STRESS REDUCTION

Situations and events in the environment surrounding us, and even those existing within us, are neutral. They only become stressful when we appraise them in a negative way. In other words, for a



# STRESS RESPONSE LEVELS



stress response to occur, a person must become aware of an external or internal reality that calls into question his ability to cope with the event successfully and painlessly.

All of the following can result in stress if a person perceives them as situations with which he cannot readily cope, which are likely to cause him pain, or which are likely to lower his self-esteem: (1) A man points a revolver at a person, and the person assumes it is loaded. (2) A vivid phantasy of severely injuring someone preoccupies a person's mind. (3) An unexpected telegram is delivered to someone in the middle of the night. It is "a perception of threat or expectation of future discomfort that arouses, alerts, or otherwise activates the organism [and thereby elicits the stress reaction]," as psychologists Robert Woolfolk and Frank Richardson have observed. In their recent book *Stress, Sanity and Survival*, they have presented a useful model of stress that consists of three levels: (Level I) a person's external or internal environment, (Level II) appraisal and evaluation of events in that environment; and (Level III) a reaction (stress) that includes both emotional and physiologic arousal. The authors emphasize the point that it is an indi-

vidual's *belief* that negative personal consequences will result from an event in his environment that actually causes stress. Emotional and physiologic arousal follows automatically once such a negative appraisal has been made.

## CHOICE OF LEVELS

To achieve a reduction of stress in our life situations, deliberate intervention should be initiated at any of the three levels just mentioned. At Level I, an alteration in a person's environment can sometimes be effected in an effort to prevent the occurrence of events that are likely to result in stress. For example, a pastor could deliberately avoid an encounter with a parishioner whose attitude or behavior generally proves irritating. A change in lifestyle or a resolution of intrapersonal conflicts could achieve stress reduction at this first level.

At Level II, it is often possible to diminish or prevent stress by intentionally changing our perceptions and evaluations of the situations, events, and behavior (other's and our own) that have an effect on us. We can alter our assumptions, beliefs, and ways of thinking that result in disruption of our



sense of well-being or our health. For instance, a person can learn to cease thinking that the actions of others (their driving, typing, manner of speaking, etc.) must measure up to his own perfectionist standards of performance. A person can choose to stop thinking about the behavior of others (as well as his own) in a judgmental, condemning, and disparaging way, and can learn to think acceptingly and tolerantly about realities he would otherwise perceive as negative and self-distressing.

At Level III, in which emotionally distressful and potentially damaging physiologic effects are produced, a person can voluntarily weaken the connection between the situation or event perceived at Level II and the body arousal generated at Level III. It is important to keep in mind that the physiologic and emotional effects we are attempting to prevent or diminish are physical realities. So, if we can stop the body from reacting in painful and self-destructive ways, we will be intervening successfully at this ultimate level. Physicians often prescribe tranquilizing medications in order to accomplish this sort of blocking. Valium or Librium, when taken before an event that is likely to elicit considerable anxiety and tension, can usually prevent such a stressful experience. But since there are less hazardous ways of intervening at Level III many physicians consider such use of tranquilizers generally unwarranted. They know that drugs like Valium are potentially addictive, increase the likelihood of irregular heart rhythm in some individuals, and fail to resolve the psychologic situation underlying the anxiety, even when they prove to be calming. These doctors, along with other therapists, recommend a wide variety of equally helpful stress-reduction techniques including Transcendental Meditation, Benson's Relaxation Response, progressive muscular relaxation, yoga practices, and physical exercise.

The variety of practical ways in which steps can be taken to intervene successfully at these three levels have been presented in a number of recent books, including *Stress and Coping* by Alan Monat and Richard Lazarus and *The Natural Ways to Stress Control* by Sidney Lecker. The remainder of this article will focus briefly on the various techniques aimed at stress reduction at Level III, so that the reader will have at least some sense of the manifold ways in which it can be achieved.

## RELAXATION IS THE KEY

The effect of the approaches that are used as alternatives to tranquilizers in heading off emotional distress (or decreasing it if it is too late for prevention) is simply to provide a sustained period of diminished sympathetic (nervous) activity with an accompanying increase in parasympathetic functioning. Activation of the sympathetic nervous system is characteristic of the fight or flight response (made famous by physiologist Walter Cannon), and

results in dilated pupils, elevated blood pressure, accelerated heart rate, faster and deeper breathing, and many other physical changes. Stimulation of the parasympathetic nervous system, on the other hand, promotes relaxation of the skeletal muscles, decreased blood pressure, slowing of the heart and breathing rate, and constriction of the pupils of the eyes. This latter process is restorative and healing for the mind and the body which, it should always be remembered, can never be simultaneously in a state of relaxation and stress. In other words, by maintaining physical relaxation we prevent our being aroused by stressful emotions, and by deliberately achieving a state of relaxation, we eliminate existing stress. The following strategies all aim at achieving the constructive emotional and physiologic conditions that are found in peaceful or tranquil relaxation.

## TRANSCENDENTAL MEDITATION

The term meditation, as popularly used these days, is sometimes confusing to religious persons. Those of us who were taught to meditate as a form of prayer are generally inclined to think of the activity as spiritual and related to consideration of some divine mystery or event in the life of Jesus Christ. But in its current secular usage, meditation simply signifies an exercise through which a person achieves mastery over the process of attention. Such mastery allows a person to experience at will a so-called altered state of consciousness. This implies that the meditating person lets go of his ordinary way of screening, processing, and classifying the stimuli he experiences and selectively focuses his attention on perceiving those stimuli directly. Concentration is an essential element in the process. When a person meditates successfully, he voluntarily controls the information processing mechanisms of the mind, including those responsible for a major part of the stress he experiences.

In the 1960s Transcendental Meditation (or TM) became popular throughout the United States and made its way (twice a day for 20 minutes) into the lives of tens of thousands of disciples of the Indian guru Maharishi Mahesh Yogi, its chief commercial proponent. The simple techniques he teaches have been described in a vast array of books, pamphlets, magazines, and newspapers published from coast to coast. It is doubtful whether there is any adult in this country who has not in some way become familiar with the mantra that is privately bestowed by a TM teacher upon his pupil and which is to be silently or audibly spoken repetitiously as a way of focusing attention and establishing quiet as the state of consciousness. Practice gradually facilitates the achievement of a condition of heightened awareness. Inside, the person is fully awake; at the same time, he is relatively unaware of outside stimuli. The method is called transcendental because it enables the individual to go beyond wake-



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ful experiences to an emotionally healing state of restfulness and elevated alertness.

## **RELAXATION RESPONSE**

The physiologic response underlying this transcendental awareness is what Benson refers to as the relaxation response. At Harvard's Thorndyke Memorial Laboratory, he and his colleagues developed a technique for eliciting the bodily condition that underlies TM and all the other popular forms of meditation. By achieving this physical state, one causes the body to counteract the biochemical changes that accompany the fight-or-flight (stress) response. Learning to meditate and attain this relaxation response can enable a person to prevent or diminish the development of the stress response (Level III) when he is confronted with a potentially anxiety-provoking situation.

The relaxation response, Benson has shown, causes a variety of physiologic changes to occur: heart and breathing rates decrease, as does oxygen consumption; alpha brain waves (associated with calm, pleasant, alert, meditative, and introspective experiences) increase; blood pressure and muscle tension decrease. All of these changes move in the direction of calming the body. However, eliciting the relaxation response is not merely a matter of sitting quietly with your eyes closed, and the changes that take place are not identical with those that characterize the state of sleep.

Benson's method calls for a quiet, undistracting environment, a mental device on which to concentrate, a passive attitude, and a comfortable posture. A word or phrase, which is the equivalent of the

TM mantra, is repeated over and over while attention is fastened on the normal rate of breathing. Sitting comfortably in a relaxed manner is generally more effective than lying down, which is too conducive to sleep. To achieve the relaxation response through Benson's method, the individual must (1) sit quietly and comfortably, (2) close his eyes, (3) deeply relax all his muscles, beginning at his feet and progressing upward to his face, (4) keep his muscles relaxed, (5) breathe through his nose, and be aware of his breathing, (6) breathe easily and at a natural rate, and silently say to himself the word "one" each time he breathes out, (7) continue for 10 to 20 minutes, and (8) when finished sit quietly for a few minutes, first with his eyes closed, later with them open. He recommends that the individual not think about whether a deep level of relaxation is being achieved, and he promises that if the technique is practiced once or twice daily, the response will come with very little effort. One caution is mentioned: the method should not be used within two hours after eating a meal, since the digestive processes tend to prevent the elicitation of the relaxation response.

Much more can be learned about the way to achieve the relaxation response in Benson's book, but a trained instructor or licensed clinician can generally be even more helpful. Complications can arise, as with all self-regulatory techniques, when relaxation techniques are undertaken improperly or without adequate supervision, or when the following contraindications (warning signs) are ignored: (1) an impending, occurring, or recent heart attack, (2) transient blood pressure elevations that need to be monitored; (3) diabetic conditions; (4) hypoglycemia (low blood sugar); (5) glaucoma; (6) involutional psychotic reaction (severe depression in late middle age); (7) paranoia (a mental disorder characterized by delusional thinking, such as persecution or grandiosity); and (8) dissociative episodes (in which emotions are disconnected from an idea, situation, or object). There are specific reasons for each of the above contraindications based upon solid research data.

## **PROGRESSIVE RELAXATION**

Another self-regulatory technique that is used to prevent and decrease stress as well as to treat psychosomatic disorders is known as progressive muscular relaxation. Dr. Edmund Jacobsen developed this program, which consists in systematically tensing and then relaxing the various muscle groups throughout the body, to teach people to learn to attend to and discriminate between the resulting sensations of tension and relaxation. Easy return to a state of deep relaxation becomes possible if the learner practices the technique for a period of 15 or 20 minutes once or twice daily. The method is clearly described in Jacobsen's book *You Must Relax* (originally published in 1962 but still



available from McGraw-Hill, Inc. in paperback).

In *Progressive Relaxation Training: A Manual for Helping Professions* (1973) Dr. Douglas Bernstein and Dr. Thomas Borkovec have presented a useful summary of the method that Dr. Joseph Wolpe developed to teach relaxation to persons who are troubled with general anxiety, muscular tension, neuromuscular disorders (e.g., spasms), and to people involved in physical rehabilitation. The manual includes a 33⅓ rpm record that describes the basic procedure. The sequence Wolpe has designed is a simple but effective one: (1) The person's attention should be focused on a certain muscle group (hand and forearm, forehead, abdominal region, foot, etc.). (2) At a predetermined signal from the therapist the muscle group is tensed. (3) Tension is maintained for five to seven seconds. (4) At a predetermined cue the muscle group is released. (5) The person's attention must be fixed upon the muscle group as it relaxes. This is a simple and clinically useful modification of Jacobsen's progressive muscular relaxation method.

### SYSTEMATIC DESENSITIZATION

Wolpe's major innovation, however, is the technique of systematic desensitization, which he designed to help people who are suffering from phobias (e.g., irrational fears) centered on such things as darkness, animals, crowds, or flying in airplanes. It involves the phobic person's exposure to a series of situations (represented in his imagination) that would ordinarily provoke anxiety. He learns to maintain himself in a relaxed state as progressively more threatening images are faced. Dr. Donald Tasto and Dr. Evis Skiei have described the process in their 1979 book *Spare the Couch*: "Basically, the treatment amounts to a slow and steadily increasing exposure to a greater and greater contact with the phobic object. This reexposure is first achieved in the mind using imaginary scenes in which you approach closer and closer to the object of your phobia, while at the same time being very careful to keep yourself in a thoroughly relaxed state. Thus you provide yourself with an opportunity to relearn what it feels like to remain calm in a situation that has gained an irrational power to make you feel very panicky." Pan American World Airways uses this technique to assist potential customers in overcoming their fear of flying. Also, a number of men and women in ministry have been similarly helped to diminish the excessive anxiety they feel when standing up and addressing their congregations.

### SELF-HYPNOSIS AND AUTOSUGGESTION

Self-hypnosis is also useful as a means of accomplishing stress reduction. Unfortunately, many people who might profit from this technique misunderstand it and have grave reservations about its

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use. They have come to believe that a person under hypnosis has in some way surrendered his will or lost control of himself. The truth is that only the conscious sensation of control is modified during hypnosis; a person merely loses the feeling that he is actively regulating his actions. Woolfolk and Richardson have offered a vivid and reassuring comparison: "Entering the state of hypnosis is analogous to a pilot's taking his hands from the wheel, putting his airplane on automatic pilot, and sitting back for a brief rest. The pilot is available for any emergency. He has not parachuted from the aircraft." Nor are persons under hypnosis asleep, unconscious, or unaware. All of their mental functions remain available to them.

It is also erroneous to think of hypnosis as involving a spell, or to view it as a result of the power or skill of a hypnotist who projects a trance onto a subject. Every person possesses within himself the ability to enter a hypnotic state, at least to some degree. So when a person learns self-hypnosis, he is simply developing and utilizing a capability he already possesses.

Before looking more closely at self-hypnosis as a stress-reduction technique, let's first adopt the definition Woolfolk and Richardson provide for hypnosis in general. They describe it as "the altered state of consciousness that results from focusing awareness on a set of suggestions and allowing oneself to be receptive to those suggestions—all the while allowing free reign to one's powers of imagination." The hypnotic state, they add, can be deepened to a variety of levels, but a light trance is sufficient for the attainment of relaxation and the



ability to respond to simple suggestions. (A medium trance can be used to numb physical pain; a deep one can enable a person to experience full recall of lost memories.)

Anyone who desires to achieve the minimal alteration of consciousness that is needed to facilitate stress-reducing relaxation and autosuggestion should examine the several simple methods presented in the 12th chapter of the book *Stress, Sanity and Survival*. The authors describe the effectiveness of self-directed (hypnotic) instructions in lowering physiologic arousal and producing feelings of inner calm. The individual diminishes tension and anxiety by giving himself these suggestions while he remains in a self-induced and relatively superficial hypnotic state. To utilize successfully the safe and uncomplicated methods they recommend, only four factors are essential: (1) an open, receptive mind, (2) a strong desire to learn, (3) time, and a peaceful, undistracting environment, and (4) an effective set of hypnotic suggestions. As soon as a person has put himself into a light trance, he is ready to make suggestions to himself that will diminish stress. For example, he can suggest to himself that he will relax more deeply each time he exhales. Such autosuggestion can provide relief from existing tension just as effectively as it can prevent physiologic arousal (stress) from building to uncomfortable levels.

By using posthypnotic suggestions a person can extend the effects of a self-hypnotic episode beyond the termination of the session itself. In other words, thinking and behavior can be influenced after the trance is removed. Such suggestions can be designed to reinforce a commitment to live life in some new way. For example, a posthypnotic suggestion could be: "I'm going to face life a little more calmly each day." Self-hypnosis coupled with this type of suggestion can be useful in virtually any type of self-change effort, as has been demonstrated by the countless individuals who used this combination to overcome problems they were experiencing with insomnia, cigarette smoking, alcohol dependence, and obesity. Autosuggestion is added to selfhypnosis so that a person can present to himself desirable propaganda precisely at the moment when he is most susceptible to being influenced by it.

## PHYSICAL EXERCISE

One of the very best stress-reduction techniques, and one that is available to practically everyone, is plain old physical exercise. In the first issue of *Human Development* we stressed the fact that vigorous exercise in appropriate form, intensity, and duration contributes greatly to the development of cardiovascular fitness. Now, in connection with stress, it should be added that exercise itself is a stressor, and one that practically forces a person to relax and unstress himself when the period of exer-

tion is over. "Vigorous activity," psychologist Jere Yates has recently reminded us, "provides a good vehicle for getting rid of your frustrations and pent-up feelings."

Another widely popular tactic for stress reduction is yoga (meaning union, or fusing). With its variety of body postures and deep, rhythmic breathing exercises, this Oriental technique engages both mind and body to achieve a state of tranquility. Those who regularly practice yoga usually find that along with mental calm and relief from stress, they achieve improved health, increased vigor, and a clearer, more alert mind. The various positions are designed for progressive development of the mobility and suppleness of the body, while the exercises aim at relaxation of particular regions with a resultant calming of the mind.

In summary, stress serves as a key factor in altering our susceptibility to disease. Medical philosopher René Dubos has observed that "more than any other contributing agent, excessive stress reactivity is the major influence in the afflictions of civilization [heart disease, strokes, migraine, arthritis, and the like]." But there is no single stress-reduction technique that works best for everyone, and we should all master one, or several, that is particularly appealing to us. Since relaxation is the antithesis of stress, we owe it to ourselves to learn how to program our lives so that times of inevitable stress will be counterbalanced by activities that bring relaxation to the body as well as to the mind.

Finally, we would do well to review frequently the admonition Boris Pasternak bequeathed to us in his immortal *Doctor Zhivago*: "Your health is bound to be affected, if, day after day, you say the opposite of what you feel, if you grovel before what you dislike and rejoice at what brings you misfortune. Our nervous system isn't just a fiction; it's part of our physical body, and our soul exists in space and is inside us, like the teeth in our mouth. It can't be forever violated with impunity."

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# RELIGIOUS FORMATION AS IT LOOKS TODAY

## Interview with Father Paul Molinari, S.J.

Early this spring *Human Development* was fortunate to find Father Paul Molinari, S.J. at his home in Rome. He had just returned from a visit to several countries in connection with the Church's new document on religious formation. The following interview took place at the A.R.C. Program, which is directed by Father Molinari and coordinated by Sister Mary Elaine Tarpy, S.N.D.

**HD:** *Father Molinari, you have been involved in the field of religious formation for many years now. In what capacity are you doing this work?*

**Molinari:** I am a consultant to the International Union of Superiors General of women. This organization, which includes over 2,000 generals from all over the world, enables me to be in touch with people from most of the countries and all of the continents on the globe. I have been involved in a great deal of renewal work in the chapters of many orders and congregations worldwide.

**HD:** *And part of this renewal work has been related to religious formation?*

**Molinari:** Precisely. The renewal of religious life in the Church has demanded a rethinking of the way in which people are being helped to develop, and a careful look at how they are interacting with God in the process.

**HD:** *Do you find that the task of forming religious and seminarians is viewed in the same way in different regions?*

**Molinari:** I am always afraid of generalizations, but I would venture to say that there is a widespread movement in which the fundamental elements basic to a sound process of formation are being taken into more serious consideration. In other words, I think that people everywhere are beginning to grasp what I regard as the kernel of formation—attentiveness, openness, and docility to

God's action in the life of the person. Consequently, the work of formation is being seen more and more in terms of providing a caring, loving presence that aims at fostering development of the life that only God can give and at encouraging the free response, given out of love, to this constantly renewed action.

**HD:** *Could you be a little more specific?*

**Molinari:** Certainly, because we are really touching the heart of the matter. In the light of biblical theology and therefore on the basis of the Scriptures—which reveal to us the ways of God's dealings with men and women—we come to see the wonderful interplay between God and the human beings whom He has made: God, who gently yet forcefully, lovingly and therefore mercifully, tries to fashion the human being according to His plan of salvation; and the human being who is attracted and drawn by God, yet must respond in freedom, that is, in the spontaneity of love, when entering into God's ways which are often not his own.

**HD:** *What are some of the implications of these ideas for the field of formation?*

**Molinari:** The very simple and fundamental principles of formation are (1) the main artist in formation is God Himself, who acts in secret in the heart of men—revealing Himself, drawing, challenging, loving. Through His Spirit He teaches, brings to mind, enlightens, enkindles, comes to the aid of our weakness, upholds. To use a beautiful biblical image, He is the Potter, we are the clay. (2) The person called has the primary responsibility for his own formation and for saying "yes" to the call that is heard. No one can take his place in giving a response that must be offered in love. But this also means that the person must become aware in a very personal and mature way of what God expects of him. (3) At the same time, and this is due to God's loving providence as well as to the nature of man as a socioecclesial being, there are some human mediators who have a role to play in this process and their function is critical if the work of formation is to succeed.



**HD:** *Would you say these principles are accepted all over the world?*

**Molinari:** What strikes me most forcibly as I travel constantly from one continent to another and among a great variety of cultures, especially in places where people have entered into deeper and deeper contact with the Scriptures, is the growing realization that the only one who is capable of giving life is God and that a greater respect for His action is necessary.

**HD:** *You aren't calling that a new insight are you?*

**Molinari:** Certainly not. I would rather say that we are discovering anew what so many men and women wise in God—especially the Saints—have known and lived throughout all the centuries. They knew how to live in admiration before the work of God, the Giver of life, who is constantly and actively present in every human being whom He calls to religious life and from whom He continually requests a renewed response. It is God who creates, but the person must let himself be created.

**HD:** *What about the role of formation personnel?*

**Molinari:** Their task is as thrilling as it is humble. They watch the wonderful mystery of God in action, the interplay of two lives, of two hearts, of two wills: God's and the person's. But they do more than watch; they make themselves copresent with God in the development of the life of a religious person. To do this they must be attuned to what God is doing, to what and how the person is doing. Their task is to facilitate, on that individual's part, an awareness of the dimensions of God in his life without imposing in any way their own kind of thinking. They are lovingly present in moments of suffering and difficulty, just as they are present in times of serenity and peace: comforting, challenging, nourishing—always according to the specific needs of the person at the various stages of his development, including those that are experienced when death comes. This final moment can really become the supreme act of love, one in which the person consciously undergoes the crucifying, agonizing experience of letting life go and surrendering himself totally to God; thus entering into the redeeming action of Christ.

**HD:** *So, in general, you would seem to be describing the work of formation as that of providing a loving presence. Is that right?*

**Molinari:** Yes, a loving presence that supplies what I would call spiritual guidance. This again must be understood in the proper sense. I mean guiding, not according to one's preconceived ideas, but in deep respect for God's action and in deep respect for the person; guidance that enables the person to grow in maturity, in awareness, in a constantly renewed response. God's call is a very personal call, and He deals with every individual in a very personal way. But at the same time, it must be remembered that

He calls in view of others: God always has the good of others in view. Moreover, God treats all men and women as members of His family, as members of the Mystical Body of Christ. The social dimension is always of paramount importance.

**HD:** *What do you think about the preparation of those around the world who are doing the work of formation at the present time?*

**Molinari:** Because of the growing awareness of all that formation entails, I see people everywhere quite eager to come together for programs and courses in which they can improve their competence and skills, particularly in the fields of theology, spirituality, and psychology. But even though many efforts have been made and great improvement has taken place, in general I would say that there is a crying need for a much more solid preparation of the *formatores*. Going around the world, I detect, more and more, a readiness—an eagerness to respond to whatever is being offered. There is also an interconnection and a cooperativeness among religious congregations that did not exist ten years ago.

**HD:** *When you think about the needs of formation personnel which, you say, are not yet being met adequately, do you have some solution in mind? A program or perhaps some sort of strategy?*

**Molinari:** I do not think personally that there is just one formula for everybody, for everything. I am certain that there can be a variety of ways of preparing someone to be involved in the work of formation. But in any case, it is essential to take into account the complexity of the aspects that must be kept in mind in order to foster the growth of a person whose life should be totally given to people. Therefore, one must have a fair knowledge of the Scriptures, of theology, and—to say it in one term—of humanity. By saying this I mean that to do successful formation work a person needs to study anthropology, psychology, and some human biology.

**HD:** *Do you find this actually being done?*

**Molinari:** I would say that there has been great improvement in recent years. But there has also been some fear of psychology, not only because of its unfamiliarity, but also because some schools in the field have not offered adequate comprehension of the total reality of the human person; they leave no room for the role of grace. Still, I have seen a number of programs where psychology and psychiatry were presented in such a way that the faith dimension was given its rightful place, and the themes of spiritual growth richly illuminated by them.

**HD:** *A number of religious people think there is too much emphasis on psychology today, and that some who are in formation work are doing more*



*psychologic counseling than spiritual direction. Have you heard the complaint?*

**Molinari:** Yes, I've heard it. I suppose it can be accurately said that some years ago, in some places and in some situations, there might have been an overemphasis on the merely human psychologic science to the detriment of an appreciation of God's action in the human reality. But I also think that in more recent times, thanks to the very sound contribution offered by some excellent priest/sister psychologists, psychology is contributing substantially to a deeper vision of the reality of man, one that takes into account the part God plays within the nature He created. It seems to me that at the present time a much more balanced view integrates the human and the divine dimensions.

**HD:** *I'd like to ask you whether you see any difference between initial formation and what is sometimes called ongoing formation.*

**Molinari:** The nature of both, I think, is essentially the same. In fact, as I said earlier, the work of formation consists in accompanying the person and fostering his growth at whatever stage of development he is in, from cradle to death. More specifically, I would like to add that this work entails helping the person to become aware of what is happening here and now, facilitating his deep attentiveness to God's creative action within himself, and encouraging a genuine and generous response to it. However, as God's action in a person is an ever-changing one, it is clear that the work of formation will take different shapes at different stages of growth in keeping with what God is doing with the person as He acts both directly within him and through people and events outside.

Obviously, a young person will need to be helped, first of all, to attain a certain level of human and Christian maturity before he can even begin speaking seriously about religious maturity. That is one of the points that may have been too often forgotten in the past. Candidates were too easily and too readily accepted into religious life without having faced the question of whether they had sufficiently grown as human beings; without having sufficiently considered what developmental experiences they had passed through; without even asking whether they had internalized the rudiments of the faith. A person's ability to make mature choices and the maturity of his affectivity—prerequisites for a truly authentic religious life—have too often been neglected in the past. Contemporary psychology rightly insists that we ignore them no longer.

**HD:** *Are you implying that to develop the affective side of human nature a facilitator is needed?*

**Molinari:** Needed only in the sense of being at the young person's side, as a sort of copresence with God, to ensure that he has a choice to develop

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**A person's ability to make mature choices and the maturity of his affectivity have too often been neglected in the past.**

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humanely, affectively, and emotionally through healthy, normal interpersonal relationships. I consider Christ Himself the model. The development of His human perfection required that His mother and the people in His village play a part in His growth. The human mind and heart of Christ were shaped in the context of people, nation, and the environment. All of these had a very positive influence on the openness of Christ as a man to His Father. They also affected His capacity to relate to people and thus enabled Him to fulfill His mission. Those who facilitate the growth of religious persons need to remember that human growth cannot occur in a vacuum—that it takes time. Social contacts must be wisely encouraged. A variety of situations must be experienced before a candidate can be certified as ready for the mature commitment to religious life.

**HD:** *The way you describe the work of formation personnel makes me wonder whether you think they need to live with those being formed under their care.*

**Molinari:** I do believe they ought to be living with them, but not necessarily all the time. What is important is the relationship. One could live with another and still not have a helpful relationship. On the other hand, a person could be physically absent for part of the time and still maintain a deep relationship by appearing on the scene whenever that would seem supportive or necessary. There again I think of Christ's way of relating to those whom He had specially chosen: The Son of God, God-made-man, who certainly knew how to form people—who preferred to live with them. But was His a constant physical presence? Did He not at times send them



away and let them develop a sense of personal responsibility? Did He not send them on missions to see whether they had internalized those criteria He was carrying in His own heart and was trying to share with them? Yet, He made Himself lovingly present to support, explain, and challenge: "What were you talking about while you were walking on the road?" "Why are you so downcast today?" Or even "Do you want to go away too?"

**HD:** *In the past, the mistress of novices, the director of novices, or the tertian instructor worked alone. But today, in many parts of the world, we find teams being assigned to the task and collaborating on it. Do you see this sharing of the work as preferable, or just a sign of the inability of many to handle it alone?*

**Molinari:** I personally feel that teamwork is an essential and integral element in the task. No one should attempt to do the whole job by himself. Formation personnel, being human, have limitations. They need to be conscious of them. I don't think any single person should present himself as the only one in charge. Members of a team involved in the work of formation can combine whatever expertise and qualities God has given to them, and they can demonstrate these values in a communal way. But someone needs to coordinate and unify the team's efforts in order to avoid diffusion and to keep the focus on the person being formed.

**HD:** *Who should be taking responsibility for the continuing formation of older religious? Is it the work of a superior?*

**Molinari:** In my opinion, there are two levels of responsibility; one rests with the community as a whole. In fact, if the community does not live in an attitude of renewal as demanded by the Church, we can hardly expect that the individual members will do so. The other level of responsibility concerns superiors who face the task of leading the community and therefore of animating, guiding, and providing the appropriate means and opportunities needed for the members of the community to have what is really required for growth at their individual stages of development. During the last few years major superiors have been struggling with this problem. They feel that this area has been overlooked for too long. People in their forties and fifties, for example, who have had years of experience, have succeeded or failed in their missions, and have been involved in a variety of activities, have often lost their sense of community and narrowed their range of relationships within it. Communities need to find ways to prevent this drift on the part of individuals. They must involve their members in some sort of experience that will revitalize the original motivation that prompted them to enter and dedicate their lives as members of a community. A person's relationship with his brethren too often becomes weakened as a result of his work commitments and his involvement with the outside contacts that

were established in the course of his mission. Communities need to create ways of reestablishing close ties and maintaining the social fabric. But I see this beginning to happen in a number of places.

**HD:** *How has it come about?*

**Molinari:** Usually through a superior's getting together with a few good brethren who have the ability to draw others along with them, and by designing a program that will do more than accomplish a professional updating. This group comes up with plans for gathering the members in sessions that focus on the quality of community life and its relation to the efficacy of the missions that radiate from it. Obviously, there is a need to update everyone's knowledge of Scripture, of theology, and of ministerial skills, but an updating of a person's community relationships is at least as important. That is what the community gatherings aim at. Usually there are some members who are skeptical at first, they don't see the value of spending time working on relationships and improved communications within the community. But little by little, they generally drop their reluctance and gradually become more enthusiastic and collaborative in this social venture.

**HD:** *It sounds as if you are saying that continuing formation consists in taking time off from the regular routine, the regular work, and the regular way of life, and participating in some kind of special community programs. Isn't it possible that this ongoing process could take place without interrupting a busy work life?*

**Molinari:** I can certainly appreciate the problem many active religious face when they find themselves invited to spend hours, days, or even a sabbatical year, updating themselves—whether you call it continuing formation or renewal. Their commitment to their work and their great sense of responsibility to the people they serve leave them with a dilemma. They want to remain professionally competent and want community life to thrive, but the time it takes to accomplish this is hard for them to set aside. The sacrifice is a big one. They are not used to concentrating their attention on the quality of their own lives—not any more than husbands and wives are at first. But, in the context of marriage, if the two people do not learn to take time to evaluate and deepen the quality of their relationship, their union will eventually fail—no matter how competent they may be professionally. The same is true regarding the community relationships of religious. They need to learn to take time to deepen the bonds of friendship and love, not just for the sake of their work, but for the sake of life.

**HD:** *You are placing just as much emphasis on the life of the religious person as on the work he or she is doing?*



**Molinari:** That's right. I feel that when we are talking about religious life we are talking about life in general, just as when people speak about married life, they are focusing on life—not work. If we lose sight of the quality of the life we live, I believe that we as religious are lost.

**HD:** *Did the Congregation itself undertake the task? at the present time to foster better formation of its religious members?*

**Molinari:** In recent years there has been, on the part of the institutional Church, an increased awareness of the need to do something to promote the ongoing formation of religious. Various activities have been undertaken by the bishops, the clergy, and religious themselves. But most encouraging of all has been the joint action undertaken by the superiors general and the Sacred Congregation for Religious. Four years ago the topic of formation was raised at the plenary session of the Sacred Congregation for Religious. Intense discussion took place and a single conclusion was reached: There is a need for a new document on formation and one especially geared to ongoing formation.

**HD:** *Who were the participants who reached that conclusion?*

**Molinari:** Cardinals, residential archbishops, bishops, and general superiors of congregations of men and women. These are all represented in the Sacred Congregation for Religious. But even a few years before this body decided to prepare a new document on ongoing formation, the two unions of superiors general (one for men, the other for women) had initiated a study within the various national conferences of religious throughout the world. Similarly, the Sacred Congregation for Religious and Secular Institutes, which is in contact with the already noted organizations, as well as the two international unions, had already begun to deal with the topic of formation and had set up an international commission of experts to work on the matter.

**HD:** *What information were the major superiors seeking?*

**Molinari:** They were asking: What are the needs of people in your region? Which are the areas in which you feel something should be done? What are your concerns? What are the needs of the brethren? How could we help at the community level, the congregational level, the intercongregational level, the national level? Individual religious were contacted through the various national conferences and were asked, What is going on in religious life? What is happening in the areas of faith, human development, and awareness of justice? There were a lot of questionnaires, and a great amount of material was compiled.

**If we lose  
sight of the  
quality of the life  
we live, I believe  
that we  
as religious  
are lost.**

**HD:** *With what outcome?*

**Molinari:** The superiors became increasingly aware of the fact that religious in general had never seriously dealt with the issue of ongoing formation. In former days formation was virtually finished once the religious attained professional status. Now superiors are seeing that what was done in the past was just a beginning. A religious needs to view life as something more than going into action, undertaking a mission, burning out all his energies, using up all the gasoline, and winding up with an empty tank. While we are giving in ministry, we must be improving the quality of our own lives. By using this expression I want to emphasize that formation should mean much more than simply pulling oneself away from work in order to refill the tank. This would be a very negative view of life. What's needed is to learn that while we are giving our lives totally to other people, we must find, in our dedication to them, great personal enrichment. But provision has to be made so that this can happen. Continuing formation should aim at the integration of activity, mission, and the quality of life of the consecrated person. That's the new vision the superiors were perceiving—they were becoming more aware that something had to be developed and conveyed to communities that would facilitate the placement of ongoing formation at the center of every religious person's life.

**HD:** *That realization developed clearly from the responses to their questionnaires?*

**Molinari:** Very clearly, and from all over the world. All the national conferences contributed. Twenty-



three religious men and women spent six months computerizing and analyzing all the information that was gathered. The results strongly suggested that a document should be prepared and issued; that's what the generals and bishops in the Congregation for Religious concluded.

**HD:** *Did the Congregation itself undertake the task?*

**Molinari:** It did, by establishing an international commission made up of 25 priests, brothers, and sisters with diverse spiritualities and backgrounds.

**HD:** *Can you say a little about the work of preparing the document?*

**Molinari:** The first big decision the commission made was to deal with ongoing formation in relation to the whole process of life. Its concern has been to show that formation is, in effect, lifelong. It's a continuing process that goes through various stages, and one that requires personal effort to keep developing, growing, and blooming, until the very moment we die. Even this last stage, death, needs to be viewed in positive terms, as a "passover" to the fullness of life. This entails, of course, willingness of the consecrated person, in union with Christ, to lay down his life out of love and to find fulfillment in that Love.

**HD:** *Why did it take the commission four years to prepare the document?*

**Molinari:** Several outlines were prepared at the start: then a number of drafts were written. Each had to be discussed widely, critiqued, evaluated in the light of a variety of cultures, and then rewritten. The guiding principles of what was taking shape were shared with different groups all over the world. This was obviously and deliberately done in order to see whether what was being prepared corresponded to the religious' needs and to what God is doing among them. To obtain help in the work, I traveled to India with Cardinal Pironio. In Bangalore we had a meeting with the representatives of 14 national conferences of religious from the East. Then we went to Senegal to meet with African religious and missionaries of West Africa. With the secretary and under secretary of the Sacred Congregation for Religious we went to Zaire for a meeting with central African countries, then back to Nigeria and the English-speaking countries of West Africa. In March 1978, a group of religious from the United States came and spent a week here in Rome with Cardinal Pironio, members of the Congregation for Religious, and the commission to make further contributions to the process. I went to Canada, New Zealand, England, and many African countries; others went to different places and to many meetings and workshops.

**HD:** *Did you find reactions to the document markedly different in the various places you mentioned?*

**Molinari:** Not very different. Everywhere I went I

found an extremely positive response, and a very constructive one. The biblical vision of religious life that the document emphasizes, and the way in which it stresses the central importance of the person, accounts for this general acceptance, I would say. There is also wide acceptance of the light that is thrown on the concept of constant growing in the community, Church, and mission; on the role and importance of spiritual direction and discernment; and on the process of internalization. We have seen an eagerness for the publication of the document because people have discovered that it gets down to the essence. They find it challenging and demanding. It shows high regard for the role of those who are involved in the work of formation and grasps the delicacy of their task as well as the beauty revealed in its accomplishment. But it also makes clear that ultimately each religious is responsible for his or her own formation—with God's help, of course—and for that of the brethren within in the community.

**HD:** *What does the document provide? Some guidelines perhaps?*

**Molinari:** I would say it offers, first of all, a deeply biblical, theologic vision of the vocation to the religious life, placing it in the context of the Church and of today's world. It highlights the uniqueness of the person who has the capacity to respond in the freedom of love to a God who is constantly acting in a creative fashion within him or her—a response that always affects the lives of others. As I said before, God is presented as the main artist of formation. But on the human level, mediators or facilitators are needed who will stand at the side of the religious and invite him to be attentive to the action and movements of the Holy Spirit in his life. These *formatores* have the task of reminding the religious that the Father sent Christ to live among people in a human body, and that His personal formation called for an integration of His human and divine dimensions; just as our formation calls for a gradual integration of the comparable elements in ourselves.

The document presents a very sober and objective consideration of the condition of people in the world today. It recognizes the variety of backgrounds and living situations, as well as the different needs of human beings around the globe. It is from these very diverse environments that Christ calls certain persons to Himself, so that by being with Him they may be for others. Emphasis is therefore laid on the need for each person to be dealt with individually if growth is to occur. Some have special affective needs; others are in need because of their upbringing, their culture, their spiritual state, or their work assignment. Initial formation is an effort to help the person in his specific situation meet his various needs: ongoing formation accompanies him during the different stages of his life.



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**HD:** *The document, as you are describing it, sounds as if it deals with religious formation from a theoretical point of view. Does it include any practical prescriptions or guidelines as well?*

**Molinari:** The first part deals with the religious vocation within the dynamism of the Church and is of a biblicotheologic nature. The second part speaks of the living principles of formation that can be drawn from the Scriptures, but it also takes into account the contributions of the human sciences. The third part is a consideration of the successive stages of development. It begins with the time preceding the novitiate; progresses to a view of the novitiate in terms of an invitation to a new way of life; continues on to the first commitment to be lived in mission, the profession-consecration, and finally, ongoing formation. A great deal of practical wisdom has been contributed to this last section by superiors, psychologists, and spiritual theologians. Viewing the different cultural situations, the document offers helpful orientations and guidelines that will lead to an understanding and appreciation of the norms that it provides.

By the way, I think that some of the most helpful observations and suggestions are in relation to life after retirement, and also to the consummation of one's life in a truly oblation and loving death.

**HD:** *How do you hope this new document will be used?*

**Molinari:** The commission prepared it to be of help not just to formation personnel but also to every community and every individual religious. Every one of us in religious life can find himself or herself moving through one or another of the stages described in it. It can foster and nourish our growth.

**HD:** *In other words, you want every member of every religious order to read the document.*

**Molinari:** I do hope they will. Those who had a chance to read it before publication—while the reactions were being sought—found it interesting, helpful, stimulating, and encouraging. Some gathered in small groups and spent as much as a month reflecting on it. There were general councils, formation teams, and young religious who did this and reported their satisfaction with the results.

**HD:** *Into how many languages will it be translated?*

**Molinari:** Right at the start, into seven or eight. It will be published, I am sure, in French, Spanish, Italian, German, Polish, Portuguese, and English. Soon, I hope, it will also appear in Swahili and perhaps one or two Oriental languages like Japanese.

**HD:** *Do you expect the document to have an effect on the formation of diocesan priests?*

**Molinari:** I am hoping it will. There are so many elements that are common to the lives of diocesan clergy and religious—commitment, attachment to the person of Christ, dedication to the service of His people. I think that a reading of the document would prove inspirational for many diocesan priests, and it could be helpful to those who are in charge of the seminary training and continuing education of the clergy.

**HD:** *Has the Sacred Congregation for Religious or the commission that prepared the document made any provision for monitoring the progress that's made as a result of its publication?*

**Molinari:** No special structure has been designed to accomplish this. We are simply trying to foster life, and progress along that line is obviously difficult to measure. Our efforts are intended, through this document, to help people respond more fully to a constant invitation and challenge that comes from God—a call to live life more fully and more deeply in Christ, so that others may recognize Him in their midst and share that life too.



# BURNOUT

## A Growing Threat in Ministry

JAMES J. GILL, S.J., M.D.

**I**t was seen in child-care workers, then in poverty lawyers, and then in social-welfare staffs, prison personnel, clinical psychologists and psychiatrists in mental hospitals, nurses, and, most recently, teachers. Psychologists who have carefully studied the work lives of men and women in these and other professions—including religious superiors and persons in social-action ministry—have repeatedly concluded their reports with the same verdict: helping people can be extremely hazardous to your physical and mental health. What they mean by this, and what they observe so frequently, is a self-destructive process that some religious fear might happen to themselves. Others, with an unfounded sense of immunity, picture it as happening only to someone else. Nevertheless, many men and women in ministry have already fallen victim to the early stages of this insidious phenomenon, which is aptly termed “burnout.”

We are living at a time when energy has become a pressing concern for people all over the world, and we no longer take its abundance for granted. All of us have at least some vague picture of the difficulties we would face if, for example, the nation's supply of gasoline were severely and persistently curtailed. We have a similar and perhaps greater dread of what life would be like if, for some reason, we were to notice a sharp and lasting decrease in the level of energy our bodies are able to generate metabolically. Having watched illness in others become chronic and terminal and having noted the pathetic signs of weariness and exhaustion, we shudder at the thought that we too may be destined to experience the same condition. The idea that we, like others, may burn out prematurely evokes a comparable response. If it were to happen to us, we wonder, would we merit simply pity, or would we in fact be deserving of blame? Is burnout

an accident, or is it brought on by the way an individual chooses to work and decides to live?

### BURNOUT DEFINED

The burnout issue was faced head-on two years ago when Jesuit priest-lawyer Alfred Kramer, writing in *Studies*, proposed the question, “Why is it that activists in Jesuit social ministry seem to have the longevity of a bomb squad?”, then followed up with “Why is it that brevity seems to be the one common characteristic of a wide variety of forms of social ministry in direct contact with the poor and the problems of the poor?” Father Kramer blamed burnout, which he described as a “physical, emotional, psychological, and spiritual phenomenon—an experience of personal fatigue, alienation, failure and more.” In their recent book entitled *Burnout*, Jerry Edelwich and Archie Brodsky additionally define the issue as one of “progressive loss of idealism, energy, and purpose experienced by people in the helping professions.”

Research conducted by psychologist Christine Maslach at the University of California at Berkeley, and described by her in the journal *Human Behavior* (September, 1976), gave impetus to many of the more recent studies of burnout that is occurring among workers in a wide and diversified range of people-oriented professions. Maslach reported on an exploration of the dynamics of burnout that she and her co-workers had conducted while observing, interviewing, and collecting extensive data from 200 working professionals. Her sample included child-care personnel, prison guards, social workers, physicians, nurses, and others. Their findings? Burnout comes with helping people. As Maslach wrote, “all of these professional groups and perhaps others that you can think of in your own



experience tend to cope with stress by a form of distancing that not only hurts themselves but is damaging to all of us as their human clients." This self-protective distancing to which she refers is a loss of all concern and feeling for those whom burnouts work with, and who often receive treatment that is detached, hostile, and at times, even dehumanizing.

### LEADERSHIP BURNOUT

Marianist Norbert Brockman, writing in *Review for Religious* (1978) on the topic "Burnout in Superiors," observed that the rapid changes that have taken place within the Church during the past 15 years have occasioned "increasing instances of burnout among leadership personnel—major superiors, formation staff members, councilors, and others." Father Brockman called attention to the fact that such positions are being avoided in view of the human wreckage they display, and that "it is increasingly difficult to find religious willing to be local superiors, to join formation teams, or even to head up schools or hospitals." His picture of the exhausted superior who has failed to resist the forces producing burnout is a stark one: "at the end of his term (he appears) an empty shell which had once been inhabited by a living soul."

It seems ironic that those who altruistically enter the helping professions to devote themselves unstintingly and enthusiastically to meeting the needs of others are the ones likely to experience frustration and disillusionment, find their energy exhausted, distance themselves from people (even friends), regard their efforts as failure, and, in some cases, even abandon their work. Unfortunately, this is what is happening all too frequently among dedicated religious helpers who work for others in many different types of roles. Moreover, it is likely that this will continue occurring with even greater frequency if we do not do something about it. Religious and clergy are taking on larger issues these days—justice, peace, poverty,—with a prevailing sense of urgency. But we have fewer and fewer sisters, brothers, and priests available and trained to work at these enormous tasks. There is no conscientious person who is invulnerable; burnout is waiting just up the road for each of us—a lurking opponent diabolically menacing the good we desire to do and the lives we long to live and even frightening some young people out of joining our depleted ranks. It is my hope that this article may help to expose this creature for what it really is—a nearer-than-our-shadow, ministry-threatening enemy.

### PROGRESSIVE DISTRESS

A social worker interviewed by Maslach revealed how widespread the problem of burnout is: "We can all point to people who have burned out—who are cold, unsympathetic, callous, and detached."

**It seems ironic that those who altruistically enter the helping professions are the ones likely to experience frustration and disillusionment.**

But it is important to remember that these unfortunate individuals did not begin that way. The term burnout itself suggests progression, a waning vitality, a fire going out. At worst it denotes what is left over at the end: a cold vestige of something that once was aflame. This downhill process had a starting point somewhere, and researchers have tried to discover the salient points along its trajectory. They have found movement, which some have chosen to describe in terms of degrees of burnout; others see it as levels; and still others identify it as stages. Nevertheless, the process usually moves along almost imperceptibly, can be intercepted, reversed, and even prevented—and it can be experienced in anyone's lifetime.

### BURNOUT LEVELS

Those who discuss burnout in terms of levels separate the process in terms of severity and duration. The first level is characterized by signs (capable of being observed) and symptoms (subjectively experienced) that are relatively mild, short in duration, and occur only occasionally. A person can banish the symptoms by doing whatever he generally finds effective, such as reducing the tension he feels by taking a short break from his work or by diverting his attention (e.g., to music). Burnout at this level, you might say, is experienced only in traces: slightly bumpy warnings of the turbulence on the path ahead.

The second level is reached when signs and symptoms have become more stable, last longer, and are tougher to get rid of. A person can eliminate his symptoms only by doing something that is out of the ordinary. For example, he may get rid of



his irritability or festering anger by getting away for an extra long weekend to some serene place where no one else's needs or demands will have to be met and where he can simply, but reconstructively, "let down."

The third level is experienced when signs and symptoms have become chronic and a physical or psychologic illness has developed (e.g., peptic ulcers, hypertension, or an abiding state of depression). At this point a person cannot remove the symptoms by his efforts alone, and even medical, psychologic, or psychiatric assistance may not bring quick relief. It is at this level that serious work and life crises fully erupt, prompting deep questioning in relation to the value of the person's present work, career, vocation—even life.

## DEGREES AND STAGES

A number of writers prefer to divide burnout into degrees that correspond to its effects on the person's work life. A first-degree burnout allows a person to continue his work without any notable sign of impairment. A second-degree condition signifies that his job performance is suffering somewhat, but that he is able to accomplish his tasks despite his difficulties. It is when the person's work is undergoing severe or even complete disruption that his condition has reached the third and most severe degree.

Other writers (Edelwich, for example) measure the progress of burnout in terms of the distance a worker has traveled emotionally from his original starting point. Stages of stagnation, frustration, and apathy mark the route of his decline. Once again, as is true of all the various theories, the central issue in burnout is perceived by these writers to be the work aspect of the afflicted person's life. In the most advanced stage, the individual experiences the greatest difficulty and the least satisfaction in his work; his co-workers and those being served suffer most. Furthermore, many who have studied or written about burnout have emphasized that the stress experienced in the work area of the professional helper's life is transported all too readily into the home setting where it disrupts the relationships and functioning of the worker's family or religious community.

## MASLACH'S THREE STAGES

Probably the most highly regarded theoretical scheme describing burnout is that proposed by Maslach. According to her, the first stage includes physical warning signs such as an inability to shake off a lingering cold, frequent headaches, and sleeplessness. The thought of going to work in the morning loses its appeal. The second stage involves such emotional and behavioral signs as angry outbursts, obvious impatience or irritability, treating people with contempt, and even shouting at them.

An attitude of suspicion often intensifies this stage. Maslach refers to the third critical and severe stage as "terminal burnout" and describes it briefly as "when someone becomes sour on one's self, humanity, everybody." Intense feelings of loneliness and alienation are characteristic of this stage.

## EVIDENCE OF BURNOUT

There is no need to pay lengthy attention to the damaging effects of burnout; they are obvious. Costs can be measured in terms of the religious worker's physical, emotional, and spiritual health; his impact on those he serves and on the members of his community; the problems of personnel turnover in his institution, province, or diocese; his loss of vocation; and his poor image for recruiting—but most of all, the sad outcome of all his years of spiritual and professional formation. In terminal burnout, the shepherd who smilingly promised to improve the deplorable conditions surrounding his flock finds himself frustrated, disillusioned, angry, and exhausted. In the end, he self-protectingly abandons his work and his people; their needs and demands have proved to be just too much for him. What novice ever dreams that this could happen to him?

Before looking at ways in which burnout can be dealt with remedially or preventively, let's look at some of the signs and symptoms that clinical experience and research have found to characterize the process. These will not all be present in any given case; they can replace one another, and they may vary in intensity from day to day as well as from person to person. They include: physical fatigue, exhaustion; insomnia; body tension; frequent sickness; backache or neckache; increased perspiration; migraine headaches; serious illness; worry about work or clients; difficulty making decisions; guilt feelings about work performance; preoccupation with problems; griping, cynicism; feeling frustrated, overwhelmed; loss of enthusiasm, feeling of stagnation; anger, resentment; blaming others and organization; accident prone; hostile thinking and speech; yelling; impatient; irritated; uncharacteristic behavior; loss of concern for others; treating clients coldly; stereotyping clients; communicating with clients impersonally; reduction of time spent with clients; mechanical performance of duties; excessive intellectualization; repression of feelings.

It is possible to see the effects of burnout within the organization for which the distressed person is working. The following are some of the signs that are frequently displayed: quality of service declines; absenteeism increases; tardiness increases; communication deteriorates; work appears disorganized; administrators are blamed for unresponsiveness; enthusiasm wanes; complaints from clients increase; worker's complaints escalate; peer support decreases; compliments are not exchanged; worker is closed to new ideas.



## CAUSES OF BURNOUT

If the foregoing are signs and symptoms that reveal early, middle, or later stages of burnout, what about its causes? I think the most important thing to be learned from all the research done is that the greater number of people the professional person has to work with (pupils, patients, clients, etc.), the higher are his chances of burning out. It is also worth keeping in mind that burnout occurs principally when frustration is experienced. This implies that something the worker wants or needs is in some way blocked or denied him. Frustration inevitably produces anger, a painful emotion that is often transformed into hostility or depression, depending on whether the worker blames others for his failures (resulting in hostility), or himself (with depression the outcome).

Frustration, and therefore burnout, is likely to be caused (1) when the worker lacks talent or ability to achieve his goal, (2) when he lacks adequate education or training for his work, (3) when he has not learned ways of coping with the emotional stress inherent in his work, (4) when he tries to accomplish too much and fails to limit realistically access to himself and his time, (5) when he does not take care that his own personal and professional needs are met, (6) when he overidentifies with the plight of those he is serving and becomes unable to assist them rationally, (7) when he becomes preoccupied with details at the expense of his main task, (8) when he feels the need to "rescue" others and finds them uncooperative because his aims are not theirs, (9) when he feels powerless in the face of bureaucratic unresponsiveness, and (10) when he is unable to communicate his own strong feelings, especially the negative or painful ones.

## BURNOUT CANDIDATES

This list of possible causes is by no means exhaustive, but it does raise a question about the types of individuals most likely to experience and succumb to burnout. The answer, of course, depends on the level of burnout being considered. Everyone experiences the very earliest, temporary, and least troublesome symptoms that characterize the initial level. Bodily tension, momentary frustration, or a flash of impatience are common examples. Such phenomena are certainly normal and inevitable in everyone's life, and they occur during the course of everyday existence—at work and elsewhere. The same is true of second-level burnout symptoms. There are times when all of us experience a need to do something out of the ordinary to overcome fatigue, a prolonged headache, a tendency to worry too much, or to focus exclusively and too long on our problems. But not everyone becomes a victim of burnout at the third level, with its symptoms of chronic physical or emotional illness. A

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heart attack, a stroke, or a case of unrelieved depression exemplifies the pathology that can come with a burnout that is generally considered by physicians to be preventable. Such signs of severe burnout prove most costly to the people who sustain them, those they serve, the organizations to which they belong, and the young people who are patterning their attitudes, behavior, and lives on those who suffer.

Which religious people are most likely to experience this most severe form of burnout? Judging from the research done in recent years, along with clinical experience, it appears that those who fall into the following categories are generally the most vulnerable: (1) those who work exclusively with distressed persons; (2) those who work intensively with demanding people who feel entitled to assistance in solving their personal or social problems; (3) those who are charged with the responsibility for too many individuals; (4) those who feel strongly motivated to work with people but who are prevented from doing so by too many administrative paperwork tasks; (5) those who have an inordinate need to save people from their undesirable situations but find the task impossible; (6) those who are very perfectionist and thereby invite failure; (7) those who feel guilty about their own human needs (which, if met, would enable them to serve others with stamina, endurance, and emotional equanimity); (8) those who are too idealistic in their aims; (9) those whose personality is such that they need to champion the underdogs; (10) those who cannot tolerate variety, novelty, or diversion in their work life; and (11) those who lack criteria for measuring



the success of their undertakings but who experience an intense need to know that they are doing a good job.

## WORKAHOLICS, NOT BURNOUTS

It might be helpful to make a distinction between the person who is moving toward advanced stages of burnout and the one who falls into the popular task-oriented category of workaholics. It is not uncommon to hear someone say to a hardworking person who spends unusually long hours on the job every day, "Don't work so hard; you'll burn yourself out." The usual, but hardly original, response "I'd rather burn out than rust out," reveals both the high level of commitment and the sense of immunity experienced by the person voluntarily enslaved by work. Workaholics like that are not generally the type to burn out. Their compulsive work habits, management psychologist Marilyn Machlowitz has found, flow from a genuine love for what they are doing. In her recent book *Workaholics*, Machlowitz describes them as "those whose desire to work long and hard is intrinsic and whose work habits always exceed the prescriptions of the job and the expectations of the people for whom they work." She states that to the observer everything that workaholics involve themselves in appears to be work, but "to workaholics, all that they do is enjoyable." They are not capable of relating to others in a deeply personal or intimate way, but they can and usually do succeed in going through their entire lifetimes without burning out. Perhaps their ability to utilize compulsive work as a defense mechanism protects them from getting emotionally close to people and experiencing the anxieties, frustrations, and stress felt by the more vulnerable individuals who do burn out. They manage to avoid distress by maintaining tight control over the way things are done.

## PREVENTIVE MEASURES

Once a worker's degree of burnout has become severe, the problem is one that requires treatment. Whether his symptoms are principally physical or emotional, the professional care of a physician, psychiatrist, psychologist, or other clinical specialist becomes expedient. When, with the appropriate kind of care, restoration to reasonably good health is attained, the person who provided treatment can be of further help by counseling the worker on the advisability of continuing in the same assignment, modifying it in some way, or moving into some other form of ministry.

When thinking about less intense forms of burnout, the prevention and treatment of symptoms can be considered simultaneously, although it is worth remembering that an ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure. Let's look at what a person can do to restore or protect his own well-being and then at

what the organization (his superiors, formation team, etc.) can do to prevent the early stages of burnout.

There are many things a person can do for himself to prevent burnout or to deal with it quickly and effectively if early-stage symptoms appear. The first is to acquire some self-knowledge. By careful, repeated reflection on his own patterns of reacting in various situations, a worker can come to recognize his ways of thinking, his attitudes, his successful and unsuccessful modes of coping, and what his needs are. He can learn when to take a time-out, just as a football or basketball captain learns when strategically to interrupt a game by calling "time out." The secret of handling stressful situations competently consists in knowing not just when but also how and for how long to withdraw from work. A coffee break, walk break, meditation break, or aesthetic break (music, art, poetry) is often adequate to interrupt a workday that is beginning to exact an emotional toll. The same holds true with regard to days off and vacations—when to take them, how long they should last, and what to do during them; one's total well-being should be learned by every religious, people-serving person. But again, successful coping must be based on a very realistic, ongoing self-appraisal.

Diluting ordinary work with tasks of a different kind often proves helpful. For example, an individual working closely with a large number of people could intersperse his hours with time spent accomplishing some administrative duties. At times it is constructive to change the nature of the work completely (midcareer shift), or at least to modify what is done or the way in which it is done, in order to prevent burning out on a job that in the long run threatens to become unrewarding. Working closely with congenial colleagues is another burnout-preventing tactic that can add inestimable emotional support to a person's work life. Regular meetings with a support group (co-workers or others) can provide opportunities to hear useful ideas, to find alternative ways of dealing with problems, and to develop the consoling awareness that the difficulties are shared and the full weight of the enterprise need not be shouldered alone.

Seeking supervision, even if the nature of the work does not require it, can prove extremely beneficial. Having someone with whom the worker can discuss frankly what he is planning and doing, how he is going about it, and how it is turning out, as well as having someone with whom he can freely air his strong feelings (especially negative ones such as anger, resentment, fear) is a tremendous blessing. So is a pattern of regularly scheduled conversations with a spiritual director who can help the worker maintain a proper Christian perspective on his ministerial work, aims, motivation, attitudes, sufferings, frustrations, and interpersonal relationships.

Another thing a person engaged in aiding others



can do is to continually develop his professional knowledge and skill by, for example, improving his skills in communication and in handling his own feelings. Workshops, courses, and readings can be useful as can a periodic review and readjustment of his work priorities. With a limited amount of time available and with a great many worthy things to accomplish for the benefit of so many people, a busy professional person's tendency to go on multiplying his commitments creates a time bomb. His self-destruction can be avoided only by regularly trimming down the number of his undertakings and realistically resetting his goals.

I wish that every religious person, whose time, energies, talents, and health are so precious, could have his own "board of directors"—a small group of advisors who esteem him highly and with sweet ruthlessness challenge him to make the adjustments that will prevent his burning out in the pursuit of his ministry. Perhaps, theoretically, religious communities should supply this needed service, but casualties almost everywhere reveal that there is plenty of room for improvement in this form of caring.

Undoubtedly, the most valuable action a religious person can take to stave off the potential damage he may suffer from his work patterns and situations is to make sure that there is a balance in his life. No more than a person can "live on bread alone" can he live on work alone; not if he wants to be humane and treat others as they deserve to be treated. To be as fully human, religious, and alive as possible—presuming that this is what God created us to be—we all need a balanced diet of work, prayer, friendship, exercise, relaxation, intellectual and cultural stimulation, and some form of play or hobby to unbend the mind. Too many hardworking religious are burning out right at this moment because they neglect these needs.

If you think carefully about what has been said about burnout in these pages—especially its signs and symptoms, its origins, progress and effects—you may conclude that the topic is remarkably similar to that presented in other articles in *Human Development* under the heading of Stress. Burnout, as a theoretical concept that has evolved under the influence of researchers, clinicians, and writers, appears to be simply a collection of insights into stress as it occurs in a person's work life. Situations and events happening in this important area result in frustration, anger, hostility, guilt, and other painful emotions that, together with the physiologic changes that accompany them, set the stage for stress-related (or burnout-related) illnesses. What has been stated here about ways of preventing burnout can be applied to stress prevention in general. Those who learn to reduce stress in their lives are at the same time effectively resisting burnout in their work lives.

What is equally interesting is that signs and symptoms of burnout are similar to those associated

with depression. This should not be surprising in view of the fact that the frustration, disappointment, and disillusionment that bring on serious burnout are also the steppingstones to depression. Spend a moment rereading the list of signs and symptoms of burnout and compare them with the criteria for diagnosing a major depressive episode presented in the official 1980 *Diagnostic and Statistical Manual* (Third Edition) published by the American Psychiatric Association. These include a loss of interest or pleasure in all or almost all usual activities and positions, a sad or angry mood, appetite and sleep disturbance, change in weight, decreased energy, retardation of talking or movements, feelings of worthlessness or guilt, difficulty concentrating or thinking, and thoughts of death, or even suicide.

To keep the frustrations of workers to a minimum, it usually helps to encourage them to express openly their needs and desires to the persons capable of responding to them. Similarly, they should be counseled to use appropriate opportunities to ventilate their strong negative and positive feelings. A spiritual director, friend, or support group can make this possible. You can help by seeing that every worker has a chance to be supervised (as described earlier). It is also helpful to insist that he cut his workload down to what he can realistically hope to accomplish, to see that he is not overwhelmed by the number of people he is trying to help, and to facilitate his taking adequate vacations and observing holidays.

## EXAMPLE HELPS BEST

Positive recognition of the person and his ministry tends to neutralize the frustrations in a worker's life, as does giving him a chance to help shape the policies and decisions that will affect his work life. Even small, thoughtful steps, such as encouraging the individual to personalize his office as far as feasible (with favorite photographs, furnishings, etc.) can help significantly to fend off burnout. So can letting him know that he is not trapped in his job and that there are alternatives open if his current work proves to be relatively unproductive, too distressful, or destructive to his well-being. It is even more important that the leader do everything possible to live the balanced life mentioned above, so as to exemplify a calm, mature, and joyful work life that those in ministry can profitably make their own.

## LEADERS CAN HELP

What are the steps religious leaders, superiors, formation personnel, and others can take to prevent unnecessary and costly burnout from occurring within their reach? First, they can ensure that candidates for high-intensity, people-contact jobs



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are carefully evaluated before being assigned. Adequate educational preparation for their work is needed, as well as the development of personality, qualities, and habits that will enable them to cope effectively with the stresses their occupation generates. Participation in training experiences aimed at promoting realistic self-knowledge, and mastery of skills for handling stress, can be extremely helpful. Such training should be considered an essential element of every religious person's formation for ministry.

### **DEPRESSION AND HOSTILITY**

A depressed person, according to the manual, may appear discouraged and say something like, "I just don't care anymore." His loss of interest or enjoyment sometimes becomes apparent to others without his speaking of it or ever taking notice of it. As depression deepens, withdrawal from friends, family, and community is accompanied by outbursts of complaining or shouting. "A decrease in energy level," states the manual, "is almost invariably present. It is experienced as sustained fatigue even in the absence of physical exertion. The smallest task may seem difficult or impossible to accomplish." In the work area of his life, a person who has reached this level of depression would be called burned out. There are still too many people who remain ignorant of the advanced stages of depression and burnout and their accompanying signs and symptoms, and who are themselves actually experiencing them. They need not merely kind

words of encouragement but professional evaluation and treatment.

I have tried to highlight the fact that burnout is a condition marked by various levels of annoyance or pain that can be experienced by the religious person who is working for others, and that its intensity is represented by the degree of interference in the person's effectiveness in his ministry. Regrettably, for many people the term ministry is synonymous with work, and as long as they are able to keep working with constancy, they feel satisfied with their performance. But consideration of burnout (or stress within work life) suggests another aspect of ministry where there is tension, anger, hostility, and other turnoff dispositions expressed in attitudes, words, and nonverbal behavior. The individual who is burning out may still work, but his success is impaired. Those he serves will have a hard time seeing the kindness and love of the Lord shining through the withdrawing, cynical, irritable, and impatient conduct of the helper.

The burnout process is a devil to be exorcised, and one to which we all feel immune. A philosophical person might state quite simply that in its more advanced stages burnout is a tragedy. A moralist might even go so far as to maintain that burnout, which can be so self-destructive to the minister and his urgently needed ministry, is a sin. But regardless of how you choose to label it, I hope you who read this will remember that burnout is possible, it is preventable, it is progressive, and its victims are pathetic. From this menacing enemy, *spare us, O Lord*.

### **RECOMMENDED READINGS**

Brockman, Norbert. "Burnout in Superiors." *Review for Religious*, Vol 37, 1978.

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Edelwich, Jerry, and Brodsky, Archie. *Burnout: Stages of Disillusionment in the Helping Professions*. New York: Human Sciences Press, 1980.

Kammer, A. "Burnout—Contemporary Dilemma for the Jesuit Activist." *Studies in the Spirituality of Jesuits*. January, 1978.

Machlowitz, Marilyn. *Workaholics*. Reading: Addison-Wesley, 1980.

Maslach, Christina. "Burned-Out." *Human Behavior*. September, 1976.

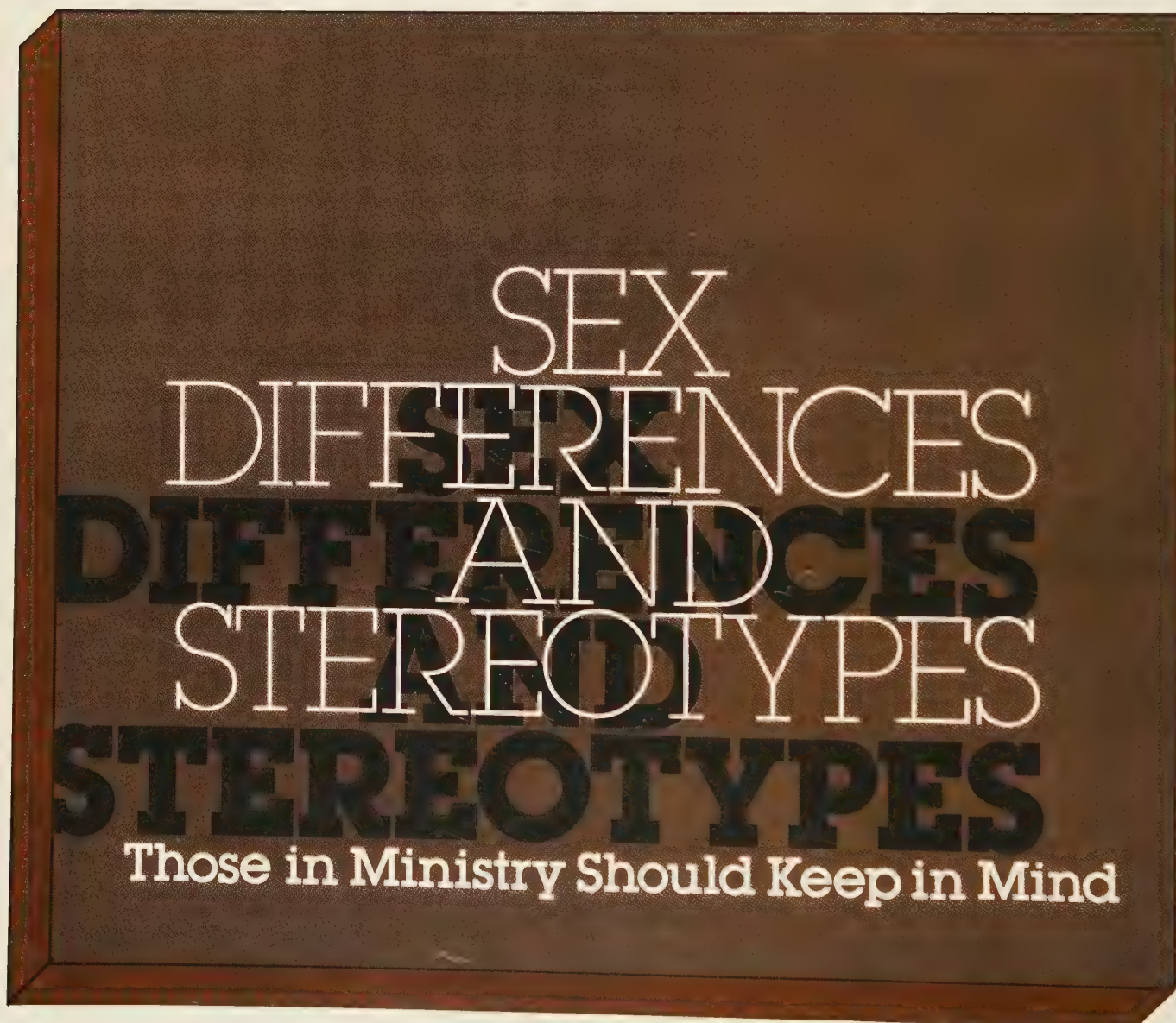


**I**t is not the nature of women or men that is being discussed within the Church these days, but their appropriate rights and roles. Recent years have generated widespread and serious concern about the rights of women to serve in ministerial capacities that are recognized as equal to those already claimed by men. Even women's rights to priesthood and episcopacy have become controversial issues.

*Human Development* is not the forum in which to debate the pressing questions about women's rights in the Church, no matter how attractive the temptation might be. But there is another closely related topic that also invites attention, and it would seem quite appropriate to address it in these pages. The subject might best be expressed in the

form of a question: Are there really any differences (other than anatomic and physiologic, of course) between women and men? Most people talk and act as if they believe there are, although they would find it difficult to specify precisely what these differences are, and would find it even harder to back up their impressions with any solid scientific evidence. Still, it would seem potentially useful for those of us who are engaged in ministry in the Church today—whether such engagement is parochial, spiritual, in religious formation, or in any other type of leadership role—to ask ourselves what our own operative persuasions about sex differences are, to learn whether our ideas or assumptions simply reflect the biases of our American culture, and (heaven help us) to discover whether we

LINDA D. AMADEO, R.N., M.S.





can tolerate the thought that we, in some ways, actually might be wrong. But it is even more important, I suspect, for us to pose the question of sex differences in an even more challenging way: If there are, in fact, some differences that can be scientifically demonstrated, what are the implications we should keep in mind while we are ministering to women or to men on a daily basis?

Much has been written in the past several years about the psychology of women and men. A large part of this burgeoning literature reflects the inspiration and enthusiasm of the women's liberation movement. Titles such as *Toward a New Psychology of Women*, *Becoming Woman*, and *Women in Sexist Society* have found their way onto library and home bookshelves alongside others like *Seasons of a Man's Life*, *Masculine/Feminine or Human?*, and *The New Male*. Perhaps never before has so much thought been focused on the traditional masculine and feminine roles that we have all learned as an automatic result of growing up under the influence of our own particular culture. In the past it was simply taken for granted that women and men were different; it was mirrored in their roles. Men were assumed to be strong and assertive; women were weak and dependent. Men were born to build, provide, and fight; women were servants or companions, bore children, and maintained the home. But as writer Peter Swerdlhoff has accurately observed, "Now, the differences, the roles, and the relationships are all under challenge as never before." He can make this statement because recent evidence has demonstrated that many of the traditional masculine and feminine traits and behaviors are not biologically based (and thus simply inherited) as had been believed for so long. Even the universally founded tradition of male dominance is being challenged, especially in our own country, since scientists have shown in recent years that innate biologic differences between males and females are surprisingly slight and few in number. Cross-cultural studies have suggested that since roles are no longer seen to be immutable, and are therefore considered artificial, the traditional dominance of men must also be artificial.

## OVERDUE CHANGES

In a way, we have come a long distance (although in other ways we have not moved very far) since the year 1848, when, in Seneca Falls, New York, 68 women and 32 men signed the declaration of principles that Elizabeth Cody Stanton had drafted for the first convention ever held to discuss the rights of the female sex. The proclamation began, "We hold these truths to be self-evident: that all men and women are created equal." They then went on to deplore "the history of mankind . . . a history of repeated injuries and usurpations on the part of man toward woman, having in direct object the establishment of an absolute tyranny over her."

The hundred participants were adding strong support to what South Carolina liberationist Sarah Grinke had declared in her famous essay just ten years before: "That intellect is not sexed; that strength of mind is not sexed; and that our views about the duties of man . . . and the duties of women, the spheres of man and the spheres of women, are merely arbitrary opinions, differing in different ages and countries, and dependent solely on the will and judgement of erring mortals." But women in the United States still had to wait until 1920 to be granted, through the 19th Amendment to our Constitution, a guaranteed right to vote. Even more surprisingly, we had to wait till the 1960s to see the feminist struggle achieve major and widespread changes in behavior and attitudes on the part of both women and men; to see the law give increasing recognition to the idea that both are equal; and to see the professions, business, and industry allow women to take their rightful place beside men.

But, as I said above, rather than focus this article on the rights of women or men, I think it is time for all of us who are engaged in ministry to give some thought to the way we regard ourselves and one another. What concerns me is the tendency we all have, from childhood on, to stereotype both sexes. This has been happening, of course, since prehistoric times and will continue to happen unless we all work mightily to curtail it. I am deliberately choosing to avoid the rights-and-justice aspect of the issue; I prefer to concentrate on some of the more general benefits that would follow if those who are ministering to others would learn to recognize sexual stereotyping when they encounter it, avoid perpetuating it themselves, and help those in their care to eradicate it from the lives they in turn are influencing, as well as their own.

## SEX-ROLE STEREOTYPE

But first, what is a stereotype? In their 1979 study of sex-role identity entitled *He and She*, child psychologists Jeanne Brooks-Gunn and Wendy Matthews define stereotyping as "a culturally determined and relatively inflexible manner of viewing individuals such that one perceives them as if they had been cast from a mold, as if they shared traits with members of a group to which they belong simply because they are members." Gordon Allport, author of the highly regarded analysis *The Nature of Prejudice*, more precisely defines a stereotype as "an exaggerated belief associated with a category. Its function is to justify (rationalize) our conduct in relation to that category." If, for example, the category is men and we stereotypically believe that men are superior to women, we will treat men and women accordingly.

Brooks-Gunn and Matthews helpfully remind us that a stereotype must be carefully distinguished from a generalization. The latter type of thinking is



based on a well-founded probability that an individual will exist or act in a certain way—something quite different from an “exaggerated belief.” Another characteristic of stereotypes is their ability to endure; people can hold onto them while totally disregarding obvious evidence that is quite clearly contradictory.

## CONSTELLATION OF TRAITS

A specific kind of stereotype is related to what behavioral scientists call the sex role: an exaggerated belief regarding men or women (as categories) that is centered on the constellation of traits and behaviors one has unrealistically attributed to them. The term sex role implies both the qualities and the related behaviors an individual believes characterizes (differentiates between) males and females in his culture. Thus, a masculine sex role represents the constellation of attributes and actions an individual considers to be inherently characteristic of males; a feminine sex role is the same, only it pertains to females. Sex roles are not inherently stereotypes. To attribute childbearing capacities to women is certainly not to entertain an exaggerated belief about them. And thinking of men as capable of impregnating is not unrealistic. But the stereotyping of women and men is occurring continually around us, and the odds are at least 99 to 1 that it's happening much of the time in your thinking and mine.

## EVIDENCE OF STEREOTYPES

Before we examine the origin of stereotypes and the good that could be accomplished by eliminating them, let's look at some studies published during the past decade that can inform us about current sex-role perceptions and stereotypes and that we can compare with the actual differences between women and men that have been established scientifically. A useful starting point is the research project conducted by Inge Broverman and her colleagues from Worcester State Hospital and Holy Cross College, which confirms the existence of persistent sex-role stereotypes. Their findings, less than 10 years old, include overwhelming evidence that groups differing in age, sex, religion, marital status, and education generally tend to agree in their view of the characteristics that make up the nature and appropriate behavior of men and women. Broverman's team also concluded from their own and others' studies that qualities ascribed to men are more often positively valued (by women as well as men) than the qualities ascribed to women. The study began by asking male and female undergraduate students to list all of the characteristics, attributes, and behaviors in which they thought men and women differed. Then male and female subjects in various other groups were given the combined list of 122 items and were

asked to indicate the extent to which each of these characterized an adult man, an adult woman, and finally themselves. Such extensive agreement was found among the responses of nearly a thousand participants that the researchers felt fully justified in applying the term stereotype to the constellations that emerged.

The Broverman study found that the masculine stereotypic traits tended to cluster around the issue of competency. These masculine qualities (considered more desirable by most of the participants) are compared with the feminine qualities in the following list:

aggressive—not aggressive; independent—not independent; not emotional—emotional; objective—subjective; hides emotions—does not hide emotions; not easily influenced—easily influenced; dominant—submissive; likes math and science—dislikes math and science; not excitable in a minor crisis—excitable in a minor crisis; active—passive; competitive—not competitive; logical—illogical; worldly—home oriented; skilled in business—not skilled in business; feelings not easily hurt—feelings easily hurt; adventurous—not adventurous; makes decisions easily—has difficulty making decisions; able to separate feelings from ideas—unable to separate feelings from ideas; not dependent—dependent; not conceited about appearance—conceited about appearance; thinks men are superior to women—thinks women are superior to men; direct—sneaky.

Broverman also noted that feminine characteristics, which cluster around the qualities of warmth and expressiveness, are more often preferred to the opposed masculine ones. In the following list, masculine attributes are mentioned first:

uses harsh language—doesn't use harsh language; not talkative—talkative; blunt—tactful; rough—gentle; not aware of others' feelings—aware of others' feelings; not religious—religious; sloppy in habits—neat in habits; loud—quiet; little need for security—strong need for security; does not enjoy art and literature—enjoys art and literature; does not easily express tender feelings—easily expresses tender feelings.

Just five years ago, Stanford psychologist Sandra Bem, using the Bem Sex Role Inventory (a series of sex-role questions) as a testing instrument, asked her male and female university students to rate themselves in terms of their possession of each of the characteristics in the inventory. Despite the impact of the women's liberation movement, half of the participants still recognized themselves as masculine or feminine to a degree that corresponded remarkably with the traditional sex-role stereotypes of men and women. The list of typical male characteristics these students identified with include: acts as a leader, aggressive, ambitious, analytical, assertive, athletic, competitive, defends



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own beliefs, dominant, forceful, has leadership abilities, independent, individualistic, makes decisions easily, self-reliant, self-sufficient, strong personality, willing to take a stand, and willing to take risks. The female characteristics most identified with included: affectionate, cheerful, childlike, compassionate, does not use harsh language, eager to soothe hurt feelings, easily flattered, gentle, gullible, loves children, loyal, sensitive to the needs of others, shy, soft-spoken, sympathetic, tender, understanding, warm, and yielding.

Although approximately one third of the students who were tested by Sandra Bem saw themselves as possessing a balanced mixture of both masculine and feminine traits, and 15% disclosed that they possess predominately opposite-sex qualities, she and Darryl Bem later wrote that "today's students have challenged the established ways of looking at almost every other issue, and they have been quick to reject those practices of our society which conflict explicitly with their major values. But . . . they will find it far more difficult to shed the more subtle aspects of a sex-role ideology which . . . conflicts just as surely with their existential values as any of the other societal practices to which they have so effectively raised objection."

### UNCHANGING STEREOTYPES

In her 1979 comprehensive and interesting study of female psychology and gender differences, *Women: Psychology's Puzzle*, Joanna Rohrbaugh poses the question "Are sex-role stereotypes changing?" She goes on to answer it by citing the work of two midwestern researchers, Drs. Karabe-

tian and Smith, who asked their high-school and college students to rate 66 adjectives previously found attributed to the different images of men and women. They invited the students to label each of the adjectives as masculine, feminine, or nondiscriminating. In addition, they asked them to rate each adjective as positive, negative, or neutral in connotation. Their findings? Males are still thought of as aggressive, dominant, rough, and enterprising; females are timid, sensitive, sociable, religious, and uncertain. As is usual in our culture, both men and women agreed in this evaluation. The researchers interpreted the fact that females described significantly more adjectives as nondiscriminatory than did males (46 percent female, 24 percent male) as an indication that females stereotype sex roles less than males do.

Karabetian and Smith also found that female students regarded feminine adjectives as more positive than masculine adjectives; males, on the other hand, rated feminine and masculine adjectives as equally positive. The researchers believe these findings reveal that, even though the stereotypes have not changed, the attitudes of women toward traits that they formerly valued negatively have shifted and these same traits have now acquired a positive worth in their eyes. This may be an indication, the researchers conclude, that "women have become more accepting of feminine characteristics not previously considered socially desirable."

Rohrbaugh believes that although people may still have the same abstract conception of what men and women are like, they may no longer feel compelled to conform to these stereotypes. In her own study of 233 college students, she found that two thirds of them apparently agreed with the traditional abstract sex-role stereotypes held by their peers but did not necessarily regard them as essential to their own lives.

### STEREOTYPING INEVITABLE

There is no doubt, then, that stereotyping of sex roles continues to be prevalent in this country even among the young, and that it is likely to continue for a long time. Such an expectation is based on the realities of human development. As long as differences between men and women do exist, children will inevitably perceive them (at least to some extent), and every growing child will certainly form an idea of his sex role based on the complex of qualities and behaviors he thinks characterizes persons of his gender. But there are actually multiple causes of the development and maintenance of each individual's sex role. According to social theorists Parsons, Frieze, and Ruble, these include (1) cultural norms (the ideas, beliefs and expectations held by people in a particular place and time); (2) socialization (the direct example and teaching of the child by his parents, teachers, and friends, and



the indirect example of school and media sources); (3) personal attitudes, beliefs, values, and expectations; and (4) current situational factors and societal practices involving the use of cultural norms, existing laws and institutions, available opportunities, peer influences, and so on. All four of these elements play an essential part in the development of the evolving sex role of every individual. (For an amplified discussion of this important concept, see "Introduction," *The Journal of Social Issues*, Vol. 32, No. 3, 1976.)

But must the child's perception of his sex role become a stereotype? It is easy to see how a male child who observes his father and mother behaving in certain ways begins to believe that all men and women act and should act accordingly. And soon he will think that because he is the same sex as his father he should be and act the same way, and so should all others of his sex. The stereotyping begins as soon as his belief becomes exaggerated; as soon as the child misperceives or distorts the limited extent to which he is like his father; and his father is like other men; and his father and other men are different from his mother and other women; and he himself is different from his mother and other women. In other words, what appears to be a tendency to generalize to an unwarranted degree amounts to the child's inborn inclination to think too concretely and inflexibly. But by stereotyping, an inexperienced child can organize and make sense out of the world thereby making it predictable enough for him to maintain a sense of security. The hope is that as the child grows up he will find people around him who contribute to a more accurate and realistic appraisal of his own sex role (appropriate qualities and behavior) and that of others. But unfortunately, here in the United States, he will encounter many cultural norms, societal practices, and personal beliefs and attitudes on the part of those who socialize him that will serve only to reinforce his tendency to stereotype.

## ACTUAL DIFFERENCES

We have reached the point at which the following question naturally arises: Just what are the differences between the sexes? If an individual decides to make a serious attempt to stop stereotyping the male and female sex roles, and to accomplish this aim strives wholeheartedly and with an open mind to discover the facts about sex-related differences, what will he find? I hope he quickly discovers the book *The Psychology of Sex Differences* by Stanford University psychologists Eleanor Maccoby and Carol Jacklin and derives the full benefit of their comprehensive review of the psychologic research that has been done on sex differences. They report extensively and comment profoundly on the most significant work in the fields of intellect, achievement, temperament, socialization, power, and the

origins of sex differences. Their 232-page bibliography, along with their encyclopedic study, constitutes an enormous contribution to the literature in the psychologic realm. A second book on the same topic that a student should read is the study of the cultural and developmental dimensions of sex roles, *Sex Differences*, by Patrick Lee and Robert Stewart of Columbia University. They have selected and commented on a collection of writings that presents the perspectives of psychoanalysis, anthropology, sociology, bioethology, and psychology. The survey they provide will be extremely helpful to someone who is beginning to explore the sex-role and sex-differences topics.

## ABILITIES AND PERSONALITY TRAITS

What conclusions do Maccoby and Jacklin reach about the actual differences between the sexes that result from biology, imitation, and reinforcement (praising, punishment, and socialization)? Only the briefest outline can be presented here, but the results of their years of research deserve notice if for no other reason than the fact that the differences, although certainly not negligible, are far fewer in number and less dramatic than someone growing up in our culture reasonably expects. After surveying all the relevant psychologic literature, their conclusions are as follows: Comparing the abilities of females with those of males, tests by psychologists have shown that (1) there is no difference on most tests of general intelligence; (2) after age 10 or 11 females excel in verbal ability; (3) males excel in quantitative ability from the start of adolescence; (4) females excel on *verbal* creativity tests, but other forms of creativity showed no difference; (5) no general difference was found in cognitive style; (6) males, from adolescence on, excel in visual-spatial ability; and (7) in regard to physical abilities, males are more muscular, but also more vulnerable to illness, while females excel in manual-dexterity tests when speed is important.

Comparisons of personality characteristics have found that (1) in sociability and love there is no overall difference, but at some ages boys play in larger groups than girls do, and there is some evidence that young men fall in love more easily and out of love with more difficulty; (2) there is conflicting evidence about empathy; (3) regarding emotionalism, self-reports and observations by others conflict; (4) there are conflicting findings about dependence (suggesting that dependence is perceived in a highly personal manner); (5) concerning nurturance, little evidence is available on adult male reactions to infants so that the issue of maternal versus paternal behavior remains open, and there is no overall difference in altruism; and (6) males show more aggressiveness from preschool age on.

In summarizing their own findings Maccoby and Jacklin, who set out to discover which of the widely



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held beliefs about sex differences are myths, which are supported by evidence, and which are still untested, submitted their conclusions in this fashion: Unfounded beliefs about sex differences include the myths that (a) girls are more social than boys; (b) girls are more suggestible than boys; (c) girls have lower self-esteem; (d) girls are better at rote learning and simple repetitive tasks, while boys are better at tasks that require high-level cognitive processes and the inhibition of previously learned responses; (e) boys are more analytic; (f) girls are more affected by heredity—boys by environment; (g) girls lack achievement motivation; and (h) girls are auditory and boys are visual.

Their list of sex differences that are supported by evidence include (a) girls have greater verbal ability than boys; (b) boys excel in visual-spatial ability; (c) boys excel in mathematical ability; and (d) boys are more aggressive.

Characteristics that are still regarded by the authors as open questions (with too little evidence, or ambiguous findings) are (a) tactile sensitivity; (b) fear, timidity, and anxieties; (c) activity level; (d) competitiveness; (e) dominance; (f) compliance; and (g) nurturance and maternal behavior. Research into these last issues, as well as many of those listed above, continues at the present time.

### **REALITY DISREGARDED**

Abundant development of all the concepts, evidence, and conclusions related to these findings is available in *The Psychology of Sex Differences*; there is no need to go more deeply into them here. Future articles in *Human Development* will explore a

number of the points they raise, especially in the areas of aggression, competition, empathy, and love. At the present time, it seems important for us to recognize clearly that stereotypes are being perpetuated in our own country and elsewhere, which, compared with the findings we have just seen, include obvious and flagrant distortions of reality. No matter how many people believe it, women are not, for example, more empathetic than men—not in the sense of understanding the emotional reactions of others. It is not a certainty that men are more competitive than women, and passive is not an accurate term to describe the most common female personality attributes these researchers have found.

Americans in general should have long ago become aware of the remarkable plasticity of human nature, particularly the qualities and behaviors that characterize the different sexes. Unfortunately, although the late anthropologist Margaret Mead's name is familiar in almost any household, the implications of her brilliant cross-cultural studies are still infrequently discussed and appreciated. Her observations in New Guinea among the Arapesh, Mundugumor, and Tchambuli tribes are enough to prompt any thoughtful person to pause before saying "That's the way women are," or "What else can you expect from a man?" Mead found that among the mountain Arapesh, both men and women were gentle, cooperative, nonaggressive, and responsive to the needs of others. She found both sexes to be nurturant people in whom sexual desire was not recognized as a powerful driving force.

### **CROSS-CULTURAL STUDIES**

Mead found the nearby river-dwelling Mundugumor tribe remarkably different, with both men and women revealing personalities quite similar to the American masculine stereotype. All of these people were aggressive, sexually driven, ruthless, and only minimally nurturant. But in the lake-dwelling Tchambuli tribe, she found sex differences in personality types that are the reverse of those found in the United States. The women, Mead reported, were dominant, economically powerful, and impersonal; the men were economically, emotionally, and sexually dependent, preoccupied with decorating themselves for ritualistic dramas, and, to quote Joanna Rohrbaugh, "engaging in much of the backbiting pettiness and emotionality that many Americans associate with helpless female 'bitchiness.'"

Mead herself concluded that "if those temperamental attitudes which we have traditionally regarded as feminine—such as passivity, responsiveness, and a willingness to cherish children . . . can so easily be set up as the masculine pattern in one tribe, and in another be outlawed for the majority of women as well as for the majority of men, we no



longer have any basis for regarding such aspects of behavior as sex-linked." Moreover, what she found among these tribes "suggests that we may say that many, if not all, of the personality traits which we have called masculine or feminine are as lightly linked to sex as are the clothing, the manners, and the form of head-dress that a society at a given period assigns to either sex." Her classic statement, "Human nature is infinitely malleable," may involve a bit of hyperbole, but for many who have been raised in America and who have developed inflexible sex-role stereotypes to which they oblige themselves and others to conform, Mead's words can serve as a reminder that perhaps they have some work to do in liberating and developing their too rigid and constricted humanity.

### SUGGESTIONS FOR MINISTRY

What then, do all these facts and observations suggest to us who, through our personal ministries, are trying to facilitate the full human development—spiritual, moral, intellectual, social, cultural, and physical—of those whom God has placed in our care? I am sure that there are countless practical applications that are possible, but nine come to mind at the moment. I will try to state them briefly, since they are included here to stimulate thought and discussion rather than to provide a detailed program of any sort.

- If stereotyping sex roles (our own or those of others) is in fact destructive, we ought to clarify our own convictions about what harm might result from the depriving way in which we think about and deal with ourselves and others. This involves careful examination of our own belief about the qualities and behaviors our society considers appropriate for all men and women. Sharpening our awareness of the signs of stereotyping is also essential. Sensitization will occur only if we work at it.
- We can help those we contact to do these same things for themselves. Gracefully pointing out to them that they appear to be stereotyping when they are doing so can provoke the beginning of a self-evaluation of this important aspect of their personalities and lives.
- One of the more obvious drawbacks associated with living a life that is held in check by a rigid, stereotyped sex role is the braking effect this has on a person's maturation process. If a person is prevented from developing any of the attributes or engaging in any of the activities he considers to be elements of the opposite sex role (or stereotype), he will assuredly fail to achieve a full, balanced development of his personality, and a half-person will be the outcome.
- If you start with a stereotype of a group of persons and combine it with an antipathy to-

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**Adults whose personalities include a mixture of masculine and feminine traits enjoy a greater measure of health and interpersonal effectiveness.**

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ward them (because of some imagined or feared characteristic), you wind up with prejudice. This in turn leads to discrimination (differential and unfair treatment) on the basis of group membership. Along with the inevitable injustice, a later result is the development of self-depreciation and decreased self-esteem on the part of the members of the group. We would all benefit by discovering the signs of prejudice in our own or others' behavior and correcting the exaggerated belief that lurks in the stereotype that supports it. We will never help others to develop if we contribute to the demolition of their self-esteem, which psychologist Abraham Maslow insisted is a prerequisite for sanity, and which, we can add with certitude, is also a prerequisite for being able to love.

- Psychologists sometimes speak about a Pygmalion effect. The term is derived from the positive influence Professor Henry Higgins' supportive attitude had upon the transformation of flower-girl Eliza Doolittle into an elegant lady. It is also referred to as a self-fulfilling prophecy. Persons who are believed by others to possess a certain characteristic come to believe it themselves, and they begin to act in accordance with this belief. Eliza became beautiful and refined only when Professor Higgins convinced her that these possibilities were within her grasp. Similarly, if we are aiming at helping others to develop themselves fully for their own and the Lord's sake, the venture will turn out successful only if we eliminate the discouraging stereotypes that might spoil all our efforts from the start.



- Probably the most obvious disadvantage flowing from dealing with others as stereotypes is that this involves interacting with them as part of a group, not as individuals. And all the theories that have been derived from clinical experience and research call for the building of a personal relationship between the helper and the person being helped. In other words, the therapist doesn't support personal development by relating to the men of the parish, the good nuns in the convent, or the teenaged boys. We need to know their names, their interests, their loves, their hates, their hopes, their fears, their disappointments, their conflicts, and their dreams. Stereotypes prevent us from knowing them as individuals and can keep them from personally knowing and relating to us too.
- Children are treated according to their sex from the moment of birth. Parents, teachers, coaches, pastors and/or counselors—if they have not purged themselves of their own sex-role stereotypes—exert pressure on the growing child to conform to the American sex-role stereotypes, which in the long run restricts the actual career choices and life-styles (celibacy included) open to them as women and men. So parents and other growth-influencing persons need to be reminded frequently about the importance of child-rearing and personality-forming practices, and how detrimental it is to foster sex-role stereotypes that limit the child's development. We can encourage study and discussion of the topic by all involved. A useful question might be, How do the sex-role stereotypes prevalent in America today foster or hinder the full Christian development of our people—be they young, middle-aged, or old?
- It is important to remember that all the conclusions from the studies to which we have referred in the course of this article are about men or women in groups, and that the results are reported in terms of averages, not as individual findings. And even though, for example, men as a group are found the world over to be more aggressive than women, the opposite is true for some women—just as there are certain men who have greater verbal ability

than do most women. Every individual we deal with deserves, in a very real sense, to be recognized as being in a class by himself. Any other treatment, if we are striving to foster human development, will be counterproductive. Why so? Because the first step in effectively helping someone is to manifest acceptance of the person as he is, and this means knowing, valuing, and responding to him in all his uniqueness. Only in this way can the helping relationship become solidly established and reliably maintained.

- It is the impression of a number of researchers that adults who have been able to develop their personalities to such an extent that they include a mixture of the so-called masculine and feminine traits enjoy a greater measure of health, happiness, and interpersonal effectiveness. Perhaps the next question we should be asking is—And of holiness too?

In deference to the title of this article, you should remember that the scientifically proven, discriminating differences between the sexes are actually very few, and that sex-role stereotypes, although understandable and ubiquitous, are psychologic H-bombs. Success in banishing them would preserve and protect the entire human race. Do I hear a resounding Amen?

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# ANGER, HOSTILITY, AND AGGRESSION

## How to Deal with Them in Ourselves and Others

*Since numerous writers in future issues of Human Development will undoubtedly use the terms anger, hostility, and aggression repeatedly, and because we feel our readers deserve to know the ways these concepts are used by clinicians and behavioral scientists, we have decided to begin a series of feature articles focusing on such terminology by exploring the technical meanings of these often misunderstood or misapplied words. In this article we will present a definition of each term, discuss the reality to which it refers, and include some of the more important facts related to the concept.*

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**S**ome people will stand before you with their jaws and fists clenched tight, voices raised, and chins trembling—obviously angry—but when you accuse them of being angry, the reply you often get is: “I’m not angry, I’m just upset.” There are some who manifest hostility in a clear and conspicuous fashion. They may be seen vociferously blaming someone or glancing his way with a look of sheer contempt. But when you let them know that you have noticed their hostile behavior, they too deny

it. “I’m just being honest with him, not hostile,” they maintain.

Frequently, a highly competitive individual will show unmistakable signs of an extremely aggressive personality in action, but when you comment on the aggression he’s displaying, you are promptly corrected in a self-defensive way. The response you elicit is likely to be, “I’m not aggressive; I’m just being assertive, that’s all.”

The terms anger, hostility, and aggression are used commonly in the everyday speech of religious persons, but a large proportion of these people feel offended, blamed, or condemned and tend to react defensively when they are told that their own anger or hostility is apparent, or that their aggressive behavior has been observed. They regard these as dirty words that imply, when used to describe their conduct or appearance, that they are somehow at fault in the manner in which they are living the Christian life.

### FRUSTRATION ANGERS

First let’s look at anger. Psychologists classify it among the primary emotions, those that are directly involved in goal-oriented behavior. Anger is aroused



when we are prevented from getting what we seek, or when something we need or want is rendered difficult or impossible to attain. This emotion is accompanied by a number of physiologic responses that are governed by the sympathetic branch of the autonomic nervous system and the adrenaline released into the blood stream. Among them are an increase in respiratory capacity, blood pressure, heartbeat, and speed of blood clotting; and rapid elimination of waste through perspiration. These reactions put the angry person in a state of readiness to respond aggressively to the frustration being experienced. If they persist for a prolonged period they may produce symptoms of psychosomatic (stress-related) diseases. This is most likely to happen when the anger is not expressed openly but rather is repressed (bottled up) or turned inward.

The presence of anger in a normal person's everyday life is seen from infancy onward. When a child is about five months old, his anger, when frustration of his needs or wishes is experienced, will be manifest in screaming, thrashing, and stiffening of his body. Most frequently the stimuli that provoke the infant's anger are minor physical discomforts, physical restraint, and being left alone. But when the child is old enough to do things for himself, anger will be aroused when he is frustrated by his inability to make himself understood, successfully put on his own clothing, or use a spoon to feed himself effectively. Preschool children become angry when someone interferes with their activities, refuses to pay attention to them, scolds or punishes too frequently, or takes away their possessions. Crying, shouting, biting, and kicking are the usual ways in which anger is expressed at this stage. Temper tantrums, usually seen during years two through four, represent efforts on the child's part to get his own way as well as a means of ventilating the anger resulting from frustration.

During years six through ten, children often express their anger through fighting, teasing, surliness, name calling, ridicule, threats, and rudeness. Later, in elementary school years, anger is usually expressed by refusing to speak to someone, excluding a person from group activities, or turning the anger against animals, younger children, or children who are the object of prejudice. An adolescent tends to become angry, as psychologist Robert Goldenson has written in his *Encyclopedia of Human Behavior*, in "situations that play on his lack of security, his sensitivity to the opinions of his peers, his urge to rebel against authority, or his need for privacy." The same author reports that in a study of anger-provoking situations affecting young adults, it was found that the great majority of frustrations were caused by other people, "for example, bossing and teasing by parents, insulting or sarcastic remarks, or being scolded or contradicted." Typical situations for frustration and anger among adults might involve an unfair loss, an appliance that will

not work, discriminatory taxation, an uncooperative neighbor, social injustice. In such situations, arguing, criticizing, swearing, and gossiping are commonly used to express the anger that has been generated. Cranky, petulant, and irritable behavior in elderly persons is usually seen in response to minor frustrations, particularly when the mobility and social activities of these individuals have been markedly curtailed.

## PERSONALIZED EXPRESSION

The way adults give expression to the anger they are feeling depends for the most part on the tendencies they developed in their childhood years. Goldenson has pointed out that among the most important formative factors are (1) methods of discipline, (2) parental attitudes, (3) sex differences, (4) family status, (5) socioeconomic level, and (6) personality characteristics. He has observed that middle- and upper-class children are generally taught to suppress their anger, whereas children from lower socioeconomic levels (especially boys) are often expected to express anger openly as a sign of strength. Fathers, he states, may ignore or encourage these expressions by their sons because they consider them manly, but mothers are less tolerant of anger responses, especially from their daughters. Both parents can shape the emotional patterns of their children according to the examples they provide of intense, moderate, or mild anger responses.

Frustration (which, we stated earlier, provides the occasion for development of an anger response) is not itself an emotion (as anger is), but rather a condition that results from the interruption of a person's movement toward attaining a goal. For frustration to take place, there must be an aroused need, a drive, or a tendency to action (usually called a motive) and a barrier that prevents the motivated person from reaching his goal. The anger is found to be much more intense whenever the frustrating interference is perceived as unreasonable or arbitrary rather than expected or inevitable. Furthermore, the emotional upset produced by any source of frustration will interfere with attention span, thinking, planning, and other mental processes that contribute to constructive and imaginative performance. When a person's anger escalates from a moderate to a very high level, his actions tend to become disorganized, impulsive, and diffuse.

## AGGRESSION FOLLOWS FRUSTRATION

Just as it is normal, healthy, and inevitable for a person who is frustrated to experience anger, either consciously or unconsciously, as a concomitant affect, it is automatic for him, under the same circumstances, to tend toward acts of aggression. Such acts may be direct or indirect, overt or sym-



bolic; they may openly reveal the aggression or disguise it; they may be real or imaginary.

We can define aggression broadly as any action intended to punish or harm another person. It may be merely verbal, as when a group of indignant seminarians loudly assert their rights to their rector in a way that induces him to retract the rules he has recently imposed. On the other hand, it may be physical, as when an angry group of deacons push their way past the receptionist and chancery personnel to the bishop, whose recent decision has frustrated their pastoral desires or endeavors. At times, when anger is extremely intense, aggression is expressed in the form of overt attack, destruction, or sadistic violence, but more often it involves merely symbolic deeds, such as writing a letter of protest in angry response to some frustrating situation that could have been prevented.

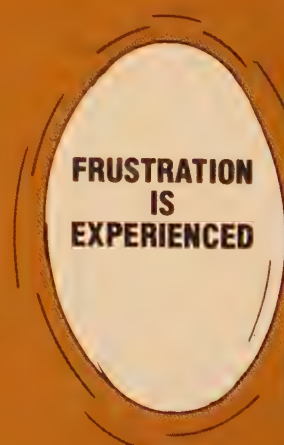
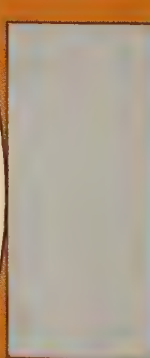
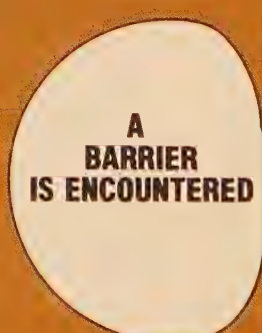
The term aggression is often used as a synonym for violence to describe destructive behavior usually directed toward bringing distress (or even death) to other people; sometimes, however, it is displaced toward other animate or inanimate objects, or turned inward toward the self. The probability of a person's displaying aggressive behavior is viewed by psychologists as a function of the severity of the frustrations to which he is currently exposed. Three

factors determine this severity: (1) the strength of a person's motive for reaching a goal that is being blocked, (2) the extent to which his pursuit of that goal is being prevented, and (3) the number of currently or recently aroused motives that are being blocked. It is important to remember, however, that different individuals are predisposed constitutionally and by earlier life experiences to tolerate different degrees of frustration. Some become aggressive when goal interference is actually very slight; others will not manifest aggressive behavior until the barriers they encounter are enormous. Anger and aggression are considered to be psychologically normal when at least a rough proportionality exists between the severity of provocative frustrations perceived by the angered person and the intensity of his aggressive response.

#### ACQUIRED OR INNATE?

Sigmund Freud first postulated that aggression would always occur as a basic reaction to frustration in any situation where pleasure seeking or pain avoidance is blocked. Clinical experience and experimental evidence gives abundant support to this observation. Freud also assumed, as have many psychoanalysts after him, that the aggressive drive

### THE PSYCHOLOGICAL PATHWAY TOWARD DESTRUCTION





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## Some individuals react to frustration by becoming passive, withdrawn, submissive, or seeking to placate and appease the person thwarting them.

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is part of the human instinctual makeup. Konrad Lorenz and other biologists have more recently presented evidence to substantiate the thesis that aggressiveness is an innate biologic drive that is released in circumstances in which fighting has adaptive value—for example, to protect home territory from invaders or to ensure the survival of the

species. Lorenz has pointed out that *Homo sapiens* is one of many species whose members are aggressive toward one another, and that two boys who encounter each other as strangers are as likely to get involved in a fight as are two unfamiliar monkeys, lizards, rats, or stickleback fish. But Lorenz' position is debated widely today. It is not certain that the aggressive drive is found as universally as he would have us believe. There are, in fact, men, animals, and entire societies that display little or no aggression. Still, psychotherapist Anthony Storr, in his book *Human Aggression*, writes that "there is so far no convincing evidence that the aggressive response is, at a physiological level, any less instinctive than the sexual response; and, provided that the term aggression is not restricted to actual fighting, aggressive expression may be as necessary a part of being a human as sexual expression; . . . the achievement of dominance, the overcoming of obstacles, and the mastery of the external world, for all of which aggression is necessary, are as much innate human needs as sexuality or hunger."

### FRUSTRATION'S APPEARANCES

It is worth noting that Freud believed that frustration always leads to aggression, but psychologist





Neal Miller later established the fact that some individuals react to frustration in other ways, for example, by becoming passive, withdrawn, submissive, or seeking to placate and appease the person thwarting them. Other investigators have found that some people learn as children to respond to frustration with regressive rather than aggressive behavior. When repeatedly frustrated, they become infantile, dependent, and unable to cope with problems on their own. It has also been shown that some children learn to react to frustration by becoming inhibited and fearful; in play situations, however, their anger and aggression are expressed to an amazing degree. Perhaps this helps explain the amount of violent behavior that is manifest on the basketball courts and other play areas of many seminaries and religious houses.

In expressing aggression, boys have been found, in general, to be less anxious about their behavior than girls. In many cases, boys have been encouraged to fight it out, but aggression among girls has been discouraged because it is regarded as unfeminine. Researchers have also found more aggression among children from deprived homes than among those from more privileged families. However, even on a deprived level, more aggression has been seen in families that approved and rewarded aggression than in those that did not condone it. Of further interest is the fact that children learn the actual techniques of aggression from adult models; television is currently supplying more than ample opportunity for them to do so. And finally, when studying aggression among children, psychologists have discovered that forms of leadership are important. Left alone, groups accustomed to authoritarian leadership often directed their aggression toward a single victim. Those accustomed to a laissez-faire atmosphere tended to pick fights with one another or to destroy objects in the room. Both groups displayed far more aggression than one that had been guided by a democratic leader.

The definition of aggression presented earlier is one that most psychologists would find acceptable, but it would not find complete favor with psychiatrists whose theoretical orientation is Freudian. Their psychoanalytic view of aggression is that actions need not be "intended to punish or harm another person" in order to fall into that category. The word aggression comes from the Latin *aggredi*: to move toward or against. To many modern Freudians movement need not be destructive to be aggressive. In their opinion, impulses to exert control, and tendencies toward the acquisition and exercise of power, exemplify aggressiveness that is not necessarily harmful. But psychoanalytic theoreticians still find many unanswered questions concerning aggression. In Freedman, Kaplan, and Sadock's *Comprehensive Textbook of Psychiatry* (Second Edition) we read: "Although a great deal has been learned about the operation and vicissitudes of

aggression since Freud originally struggled with it, there is still a great deal that remains to be learned about its nature, its origins, the conditions that produce and unleash it, the developmental factors that contribute to its pathological deviations and its more constructive integration into the realm of human functioning."

## HOSTILITY IS MOTIVATION

A term often used interchangeably with aggression is hostility. Unlike the former, it is always understood as implying destructiveness, or at least an aiming toward destructive ends. The Latin word from which hostility is derived, *hostis*, means enemy. "Persistent anger accompanied by an intense urge to retaliate" is the way Goldenson defines hostility, emphasizing both its affective component and its belligerent intent.

Although hostility is found as an element in practically every type of psychiatric illness, including psychoses, neuroses, and character disorders, as well as in those illnesses that are psychosomatic in origin, it is also a common feature of normal and healthy human behavior. Differentiating between anger and hostility as they appear in everyday life is sometimes difficult, but when you see what could be termed aggressive anger or the rankling resentment that arises from prolonged frustrations or deprivations, you can be quite sure it is hostility you are observing.

Whereas aggression is a term generally used to describe behavior, hostility primarily denotes feeling and motivation. "Hostility is a motivating force — a conscious or unconscious impulse, tendency, intent or reaction—aimed at injuring or destroying some object, animate or inanimate," writes psychiatrist Leon Saul in his profound study *Psychodynamics of Hostility*. He adds that hostility is usually accompanied by the feeling or emotion of anger, and when acted out breeds violence, crime, and destruction of innocent victims. Saul views the many forms of man's hostility to man as understandable if they are looked upon as symptoms of a mechanism run rampant—the fight-or-flight reflexes that were essential to human survival in a cave or jungle now operating, all too often outrageously, in our civilized settings. When misunderstood and unrestrained, he says, this mechanism is "apt to outstrip its controls and be destructive to others and oneself." He demonstrates that hostility, through this innate physiologic mechanism, is inextricably fused to every form of withdrawal, depression, phobia, compulsion, perversion, addiction, and schizophrenia.

Hostility is sometimes expressed overtly in the form of destructive aggression, but in some instances it masquerades as justice, righteousness, and even love. We see it in delinquency, rebellion, warfare, rape, child abuse, divorce, and suicide.

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## **Hostility is sometimes expressed in destructive aggression, but in some instances it masquerades as justice, righteousness, and even love.**

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Children often reveal their hostility through tattling, belittling others, soiling, bedwetting, refusing to eat, or exhibiting sibling rivalry; adults do so through prejudice, resentful attitudes, irritability, overcompetitiveness, overaggressiveness, and contempt for the way others live or perform. Hostility is one of the most disturbing of all emotions. It can generate intense feelings of guilt, particularly when directed toward our parents, since we have been taught that hostile attitudes and actions are moral transgressions. It can arouse fear of retaliation as well as fear of loss of love and approval. Consequently, the very presence (conscious or unconscious) of hostility in the human heart can become a major source of anxiety and insecurity. In order to protect ourselves from these uncomfortable feelings, we tend to use defense mechanisms such as denial (not facing the fact that we are harboring feelings of hostility) or reaction formation, which involves becoming excessively friendly or oversolicitous toward the person who is frustrating us—a tactic unconsciously used at times by hostages whose hostility, if recognized by their captors, could result in the hostages' destruction. Neurotic persons, too, frequently disguise their hostility by taking a compliant, subservient, self-suppressing attitude toward others in order to obtain acceptance, love, and security.

### **GENESIS OF HOSTILITY**

We do not inherit hostility. It is not something genetically transmitted that we are powerless to change. But it is communicated to a child through the conscious and unconscious actions of his parents. It is during infancy and childhood that a hostile disposition is formed—that is, a highly sensitized fight-or-flight psychologic mechanism—

generally as a result of mismanagement or neglect. The conditioning influence of parental behavior, whether this be well-meaning and unconscious, or deliberate, is recognized again and again in clinical experience with children and adults to be the mechanism that sows the seeds of vulnerability to stress and emotional problems that eventually flower in the form of a hostility-prone personality. The neglect, rejection, overprotection, or domination the child repeatedly experiences tends to make him expect this sort of treatment in the future. Fear and resentment are the sentiments he will experience habitually, deep down in his being, and an exaggerated readiness to flee others will be chronically present. As a result, such a person experiences life's inevitable frustrations in a hypersensitive way, characterized by intense anger or rage and retaliatory hostility. Unfortunately, the resentment developed earlier toward the parents, whom he feels (justifiably or not) have mistreated him, eventually gets turned against all others who in any way fail to behave according to his expectations, needs, or demands. Moreover, the hostile type of individual is usually plagued with feelings of guilt and suffers from a diminished level of self-esteem. His primitive impulses—as a child and later on—are such that he wants to injure or destroy even the very person upon whom he is dependent, because he feels entitled to a more ideal treatment than he is receiving. Chronic anxiety results from this situation since he lives in a vague but constant fearlike state, expecting that his hostility, if perceived by others, will drive them off and result in his losing the love or approval for which he yearns. So, hostility is usually accompanied by guilt and anxiety or fear, and this combination of distressful affects sets the stage for the possible development of a wide variety of emotional or psychosomatic illnesses.

### **MAJOR HOSTILITY SOURCES**

In time, the major sources of a person's irritation, frustration, anxiety, and hostility, which are heightened as a result of early-life deprivations and the emotional patterns resulting from them, are seen by psychoanalysts like Saul to center around a few powerful underlying motivations. These include (1) a need to be dependent and to be independent, (2) a need to receive and to give love, (3) the sex drive, (4) feelings of inferiority and egotism (or narcissism), and (5) competitiveness. It is principally these motivations, states Saul, that "combine in various degrees and proportions to produce the vast array of different personalities, forms of psychopathology, and symptoms of psychosomatic diseases." In other words, the principal sources of hostility are disturbances in the normal maturation of these five motivations, which are discreet but closely interrelated forces. These interferences result chiefly from defective, early-life interaction



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## The hostile type of individual is usually plagued with feelings of guilt and suffers from a diminished level of self-esteem.

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with parents and are exacerbated later on by unsatisfactory relationships and interactions with others.

In this article we have looked very briefly at the nature, major characteristics, and sources of anger, aggressiveness, and hostility. It is apparent that the three are closely related, overlap each other, and are not completely explained either here or elsewhere in professional literature. But it is clear that aggression, as action, stems from aroused human needs or wishes that encounter a barrier, thereby

resulting in a perceived frustration that generates the emotion of anger. This affect, in turn, combines with hostility, which provides the motivation for aggressive, destructive acts. These may be directed outwardly in a fighting-type behavior, or inwardly, contributing to depression, self-destructive thoughts or deeds, and even suicide.

Wars, all forms of emotional illness, and most of the distress experienced in religious community life are all related to the topics we have been considering. In the fall issue, Part II of this article will focus on the steps that can be taken to deal effectively and constructively with these realities. We will also discuss the strategies that persons in formation, leadership, and counseling roles can adopt in their efforts to foster an integrated and mature development of those in their care with regard to these crucial, interesting, and perennial life issues, with special emphasis on their spiritual and moral—not just psychological and social—implications.

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## Recommendations for Sleep

**T**he National Academy of Science's Institute of Medicine has offered the following suggestions for those who experience difficulty in going to sleep:

1. Don't nap during the daytime.
2. If you don't fall asleep right away, get up and do something before you try again.
3. Set a definite time to go to sleep and to get up.
4. Exercise daily.
5. Take a bath and/or drink warm milk before retiring.
6. Hypnotics (drugs prescribed to help you to fall asleep and stay asleep) stay in your blood stream for a long time. If you take sleeping pills for a week, the accumulation in your system will be four to six

times what it was the first morning. Be aware of any decrease in your abilities (such as hand-eye coordination). Be especially careful about driving when drowsy.

7. Heavy smoking and drinking a lot of coffee reduce the effectiveness of hypnotic (sleep) medications.

8. Hypnotics can interfere with other drugs you are taking. Let your doctor know if you are taking another medication of any type.

9. If you have respiratory problems, impaired liver function, or you are elderly, there are increased risks in taking Dalmane (flurazepam hydrochloride) or barbiturates for sleep.

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# Dorotheos of Gaza:

## A MAN FAR AHEAD OF HIS TIME

DON F. SUTTON, S.J., Ph.D.

The section in the Greek Patrology devoted to *Discourses* gives the title archimandrite to St. Dorotheos, who was born in Antioch, Syria, early in the sixth century, then moved to Gaza to study when he was 20 years old. He was a disciple of St. Procopius of Gaza and eventually found his way to a monastery at Thawatha in search of piety and advanced knowledge. There he came under the influence of two hermits, Barsanufius and John, and became a monk.

In the West, St. Benedict summed up the ideals of monastic life in his day, drawing the bulk of his teaching from the monastic tradition of the East—from Egypt and the desert areas—but imprinting it with the spirit and genius of Rome and the West. Dorotheos appears to have played a comparable role in the East at nearly the same moment in history. As an abbot, he wrote his *Discourses* to encourage his monks to become human and spiritual in the fullest sense. His writings have been recently translated by Eric P. Wheeler, O.S.B., and published by Cistercian Publications under the title, *Dorotheos of Gaza, Discourses and Sayings*.

**T**here is an amazingly contemporary quality about many of the ideas that the sixth century spiritual writer and monk Dorotheos of Gaza presented in the writings contained in *Discourses and Sayings*. And since it is one of the aims of *Human Development* to direct our readers' attention to practical and interesting elements of spirituality, both old and new, it might prove helpful to many to look into this ancient thinker's observations, some of which can

readily be related to current psychologic theorizing as it is expressed by a number of the most prominent behavioral scientists of our day.

My intention is to compare Dorotheos' ideas with those of modern behavioral authorities, "third force" psychologists, and reality therapists, then to offer some reflections on his thoughts about groups, particularly in relation to two major concepts—feedback and personal responsibility. But I would like to begin by drawing attention to his awareness of affectivity. We are living at a time when the emphasis placed on the affective or emotive dimension of human personality is widely considered to be new. Yet, when reading Dorotheos we see that "new" is hardly accurate, since in the sixth century he related a discussion between a sophist and the old monk Zosimos that highlights the importance of feelings. The sophist was plying the old man with questions in an attempt to develop a rational explanation of his topic, but Zosimos replied, "I do not know how to explain it to you, but it is quite true." Pressed further, he responded, "Do not try to confuse me. I tell you this is exactly how I feel." Dorotheos makes it clear that feelings can be depended upon and maintains that "... [every] process cannot be explained in words."

Dorotheos' writings also reflect his awareness of the complex interaction between mind and body. "Why is it said that bodily labors bear the soul on towards humility, and how can it be said that bodily labors have an effect on the soul?" And he answered, "Inasmuch as the wretched soul at the same time suffers and cooperates with the things done by the body, the elder says that bodily labor leads to humility." The cogency of his insight is apparent when he writes, "The dispositions of soul of a healthy person are one thing; those of a sickly person, another; of a hungry person, another; of a well-fed



person another. Similarly the dispositions of a man riding a horse differ from those of a man riding a donkey; those of a man seated on a throne from those of a man sitting on the floor. The dispositions of one beautifully clothed differ from one clad in rags." Those who seriously study the psychology of clothing or posture or body boundaries would probably be surprised to find that a sixth-century monk made such astute observations.

## MODIFYING BEHAVIOR

The contemporary school of psychotherapy that aims at behavior change (behavior modification) would recognize one of its fundamental principles, successive approximations, in a number of Dorotheos' passages. This principle states that to change a behavior, a therapist should take the individual through a gradually changing series of similar yet slightly different behaviors, each one bringing him closer to the desired end. Dorotheos recognizes the validity of this approach when he says "If you are irritated and stir up your anger against your brother, then you strike him, speak evil against him, then plot against him and so go forward little by little, and at last you come to murder him."

A clear example of successive approximations applied by Dorotheos is found in his direction of the novice monk Dosithy. The mentor desired to help his disciple develop some restraint in his eating habits, and when dinner time came he said, "Eat as much as you want, but let me know how much." After dinner, Dosithy came back and said, "I have eaten two whole 2 lb. loaves." And Dorotheos asked, "Do you feel all right?" To which Dosithy replied, "Yes, Father." "You don't feel hungry?" "No, Father." "From now on then, eat one and a half loaves, and cut the remaining half in two; eat half of it and leave the rest." Dosithy did this and the next day Dorotheos asked him, "Do you feel hungry, Dosithy?" And he replied, "Yes, Father, I do a bit." After some days Dorotheos again asked him, "Do you still feel hungry, Dosithy?" And he replied "No, Father, thanks to your prayers, I'm all right now." "Then," said Dorotheos, "now make do with one loaf and a half and leave the rest." And so, little by little, the ration was reduced until Dosithy was able to live on as little as half a loaf a day.

Dorotheos appreciated the fact that behaviors and attitudes that are harmful can also worsen in line with the principle underlying successive approximations. Describing such an occurrence in terms of a man's pride he writes:

From the beginning, if one of his brethren said anything to him he used to say, 'Who the devil is he? He is not Zosimos or one of his lot.' Then he began to cheapen them and to say, 'There is not one of any importance but Macarios,' and after a little while, to say, 'Who is Macarios

anyway? There is no one any good, except perhaps Basil or Gregory.' And then in a short while he began to debunk them, saying, 'Who is Basil? Who is Gregory? There is no one who counts but Peter and Paul.' And I say to him, 'Really, brother, you are going to despise these soon.' And believe me, after a short time he began saying, 'Who is Paul? Who is Peter? There is no one but the Holy Trinity!' And so at last he lifted himself up against God—and there he gave up!

## STEP-BY-STEP DEVELOPMENT

Dorotheos seems to be acknowledging that behavior is altered gradually, bit by bit, and not in a radical or abrupt manner. He is also implying that a person's self-image is altered gradually. Certainly, Dorotheos was not a Watsonian behaviorist\*, but he was profoundly aware of the part that incremental learning plays in the development of behavior.

Another behavioristic tendency seen in Dorotheos' *Discourses*, is his insistence that only behavior can be observed, not its motivation. This is a principle that is sacred in encounter and training (T-) groups, and it provides the underpinning for the practice of giving feedback in such groups. He writes "... it is one thing to say 'He got mad,' and another thing to say 'He is bad-tempered,' and to reveal ... the whole disposition of his life." He makes this point even more strongly when he relates three different perceptions of the same activity. "A certain man happened one night to be in a certain place. I won't call him a monk but someone from the town. Three men passed by him. One thought he was waiting for a street walker; another thought he was a thief; and the third thought he had been invited by a friend to meet him at a neighboring house and they were going off somewhere to say some prayers. You see, all three men saw the same man in the same place and similarly, each one thought his own thoughts about him." Dorotheos' point is that our judgment often says more about those who are judging than it does about the person being judged, an observation frequently made today in group training sessions.

Dorotheos' sensitivity to the progressive or incremental dimension of behavior change is again evidenced in his understanding of thought patterns: "... if you dwell on it and inflame your heart and torment yourself with thoughts about why he said this to me, and what do I have to say to him, you are blowing on the embers and adding fuel and causing smoke! From this influx of thoughts and

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\*John B. Watson (1878-1958), a pioneering psychologist at Johns Hopkins University, is known as the father of American behaviorism, which holds that the subject matter of human psychology is exclusively the behavior of the human being.

## **Dorotheos strikes a balance between an unrealistic optimism about man's perfectibility and the role man must play to realize his potential.**

conflicting emotions the heart catches fire and there you are in a passion. . . . This is why I always say to you: when a passion arises, when it is young and feeble, cut it off, lest it stiffen and cause you a great deal of trouble. It is one thing to pluck out a small weed and quite another thing to uproot a great tree." It is, in fact, ideas such as these that led to the development of new therapeutic methods as in Silva's *Mind Control* system, Albert Ellis's *Rational Psychotherapy*, or Maxwell Maltz' *Ratio-Emotive* therapy. "You feel the way you think" is their major premise, and they believe you can control what you think and therefore what you feel—but that idea wouldn't come as news to Dorotheos.

### **THIRD FORCE HUMANISM**

A group of leading psychologists and psychiatrists have, in recent decades, been called the third force to distinguish their movement from the two earlier forces, psychoanalysis and behaviorism. It was psychologist Abraham Maslow who provided the name, applying it to the humanistic school of psychology, which is characterized by a positive and optimistic study of the inner nature of man. The third force position emphasizes the importance of promoting full realization of a person's creative potentialities. Dorotheos is more compatible with this school of modern theoreticians than with any other single group. He, too, holds a very positive view of human nature, particularly as it existed in its original, before-the-fall condition. He regards it as being good, "healthy in emotions and sense perceptions," and views the function of law and the Ten Commandments as enabling it to "start functioning as nature intended it to," with a restoration of the original humanity made possible through redemption and revelation. "Truly man is," Dorotheos believes, "of all visible creatures, the most precious because man

was created, says God, to our own image and likeness." Finally, "When God created man, he breathed into him something divine . . . and [we should] bring to life through the observance of the Commandments that buried spark." Dorotheos seems to strike a balance between an unbounded, unrealistic optimism about man's perfectibility and an emphasis on the role man plays and the work he must do in order to realize his potential.

### **UNCONDITIONAL POSITIVE REGARD**

Dorotheos makes a number of points in his writing that show his special compatibility with psychologist Carl Rogers, another well known representative of the humanistic or third force school. Rogers is the originator of what is called nondirective or person-centered therapy. One fundamental premise of his system is known as positive regard. The need to be positively regarded or liked by others originates, according to Rogers, during infancy as a consequence of the attention and affection a baby receives. This need can cause trouble, however, if a person acts, not in accordance with his true feelings, but in a way calculated to please others and to gain their approval. If the positive regard is unconditional—that is, if there is no disapproval or negative evaluation of the individual by those significant others in his world—then no incongruity will develop within the self-image. Dorotheos recognized the value of (and the Christian basis for) this unconditional positive regard and gives evidence of this in his writings and his own actions. "If we have true love with sympathy and patient labor, we shall not go about scrutinizing our neighbor's shortcomings. . . . Were they [the saints] blind? Not at all! But they simply would not let their eyes dwell on sins. . . . But they did not hate the sinners. . . . nor condemn them, but did all they could to heal them."

A powerful example of unconditional positive regard is provided by Dorotheos' tale of his treatment of a monk who had some problems with food.

One day, therefore, there came to me one of the brothers who said, 'Forgive me and pray for me, because I steal and eat (outside the proper time).' I said to him, 'Why is this? Do you get hungry all the time?' And he told me, 'Yes, I don't get enough at the brothers' table and I cannot ask for more.' So I said, 'Why don't you go to the abba and tell him about it?' He replied, 'I am ashamed to.' So I said, 'Would you like me to go for you?' He said, 'I leave it to you father.' I went and told the abba and he said to me, 'Do what charity commands and devise the best means of curing him.' Then I took him to the cellarer, and said to him, 'Do an act of charity and at whatever time this brother comes to you, give him as



much food as he wants and do not hinder him in any way.'

When the cellarer heard this, he said to me, 'I will do exactly as you have commanded.' This worked all right for a few days before the brother came to me and said, 'Forgive me, father, because I have begun stealing again.' I said to him, 'Why? Did the cellarer not give you whatever you wanted?' 'Yes!' he replied, 'he supplied whatever I asked for but I was filled with shame before him!' Then I said, 'Are you ashamed before me?' He said, 'No.' So I said, 'All right, whatever you want, come and ask me for it and you shall have it, but don't steal anymore.' At that time I was doing service in the infirmary so he used to come and get what he wanted from me. After some days he began stealing again and came in great trouble to tell me, 'Look, I'm stealing again.' I said, 'My dear brother, did I not give you everything you wanted?' And he said, 'Yes!' I said, 'Then why do you keep on stealing?' But he said, 'Forgive me, but I don't know why. I simply feel the urge to steal.' Then I asked him, 'If so what do you do with what you have stolen?' And he said, 'I give it to the donkey.'

And Dorotheos concludes "Do you see what a miserable affliction it is?" He considers this man's behavior an affliction; there is not a word of condemnation, not in his interaction with the man, nor in his commentary in the pages surrounding it. There is no indication of rejection, but a consistent willingness to be with the man in the state in which he finds himself and to do whatever might be helpful in extricating him from a situation or from behaviors that the man finds unacceptable in himself. It is a remarkable example of what would be considered unconditional positive regard in a Rogerian therapeutic setting.

Rogerian person-centered therapy (and most humanistic or third force therapies) stresses the need to facilitate self-acceptance in the individual. Dorotheos saw self-acceptance as the bedrock of a virtuous life: "Why should an emotional man find it strange to be disturbed by his emotions? Why should he be overwhelmed if he sometimes gives way to them? If you have them inside yourself why are you disturbed when they break out? You have their seeds in you and yet you ask, why do they spring up and trouble me? Better to have patience. . . ." Dorotheos also saw that self-acceptance was fundamental to the unconditional positive regard that is desirable in interpersonal relationships. "For through this repeated coming to your neighbor's rescue, you come to long for what is advantageous for him as well as advantageous for yourself and what is profitable for him as well as profitable to yourself. This is to love your neighbor as yourself." Repeatedly, Dorotheos counsels pa-

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tience and self-acceptance and shows that these aid in developing the kind of interpersonal behavior and relationships he thinks belong to the essence of a Christian life.

#### **REALISTIC RESPONSIBILITY**

Contemporary theorist William Glasser has proposed a Reality Therapy system in which responsibility is the fundamental principle. He maintains that we all have needs, and we must develop the ability to fulfill them in a way that does not deprive others of the fulfillment of their own. A responsible person, according to Glasser, acts in a way that promotes his feelings of self-worth and worthiness to others. Glasser believes one of the best ways to encourage the development of responsibility is to allow the individual to experience the natural consequences of his own behavior. In this same vein, Dorotheos comments, "It is impossible for a man not to reap what he sows." And Dorotheos acknowledges, as does Glasser, that it takes work to become responsible, "What we need is a little labor."

Dorotheos noted the profit a person gains by experiencing the natural consequences of his own actions fourteen centuries ahead of Glasser: "... the soul deviating from virtue is in a state of violence and this is what makes evil; therefore it suffers injury at its own hands and is deprived of that state of rest which by nature it should have." These words convey Dorotheos' belief that behavior leads to its own consequences and reflect his conviction that the natural (pre-fall) state of the person is one of rest and peace.

#### **FEEDBACK IN GROUPS**

While much of Dorotheos' writing shows his keen ability as a psychologist, several of his passages also



attest to his amazing insight into the dynamics of interpersonal behavior within groups. One topic of considerable interest in current group work is the area of feedback. Whole books have been written and workshops focused on the proper techniques to make this activity profitable and as painless as possible for those involved. Once again, far ahead of his time, Dorotheos addressed the topic of feedback. "If a man having any of the dispositions I mentioned above [gossiping, defaming, despising, or pretending to righteousness] speaks to the abbot himself [about another] he is not speaking for the correction of his brother, nor is he if he speaks only on account of injury done to himself; . . . let him grope in his own heart and if he experiences there a movement of anger or resentment let him not speak." This is certainly an early version of the belief that feedback is only genuine when the motivation behind it is the deepening of the relationship between the giver and the receiver. If it is given for other reasons, it is not genuine feedback but a disguised form of criticism, rejection, or correction. Dorotheos knew that centuries ago.

## PRINCIPLE OF RESPONSIBILITY

One of the most attractive of all of Dorotheos' presentations is one that shows his powers of observation and common sense when dealing with two disputing individuals. He perceives the incident as related to the sense of responsibility mentioned earlier. Instead of accepting responsibility for our own actions, he says, we "have left the straight road of blaming ourselves and taken the crooked road of blaming our neighbor." He continues:

There came to me once two brothers who were always rowing, and the elder was saying about the younger, 'I arrange for him to do something and he gets distressed, and so I get distressed, thinking that if he had faith and love towards me he would accept what I tell him with complete confidence.' And the younger was saying, 'Excuse me, reverend father, but he does not speak to me with the fear of God, but rather as someone who wants to give orders. I recokon that is why my heart has not full confidence, as the Fathers say.' Impress on your minds that each blames the other and neither blames himself, but both of them are getting upset with one another, and although they are begging each other's pardon, they both remain unconvinced 'because he does not (from his heart) show me deference and therefore I am not convinced, for the Fathers say that he should.' And the other says, 'Since he will not have complete confidence in my love until I show him deference, I for my part, do not have complete confidence in him.' My God, do you see how ridiculous it is? Do you see their perverse way

of thinking? . . . Each one of these had to throw the blame on the other. One says: I cannot sincerely be asking pardon all the time where my brother is concerned, therefore God does not give him full confidence in me. The other says: I cannot be reconciled in love towards my brother before he asks pardon, and for that reason God does not give him full confidence in me! What they really ought to do is just the opposite. The first ought to say: I speak with presumption and therefore God does not give my brother confidence in me. And the other ought to be thinking: My brother gives me commands with humility and love but I am unruly and have not the fear of God. Neither of them found that way and blamed himself but each of them vexed the other.

Clearly Dorotheos had a lot of experience with interpersonal relationships. It seems reasonable to conclude that the profound quality of his psychological insights may have come from his reflection on the behavior of the monks around him. Certainly he made good use of the raw data they provided.

We do not find in *Discourses and Sayings* a complete system of psychology or a tightly knit and comprehensive theory of human behavior. What we do see is the reflections of a man with a vast amount of experience in dealing with human frailty and the complexities of human interaction. His explanations were eclectic, and thus we have had to compare him with a number of contemporary theorists, some of whom might not agree with one another. It is a part of the genius of Dorotheos, however, that he could reconcile differing points of view (at least they seem different today) as he attempted to understand and explain human behavior. Most probably the reconciling element in his thinking is one we have not even touched upon here—the element of faith in God as a "good, man-loving God," who desires that we live as "sons not slaves," and that as God's children we realize that we are "members one of another," and that "only through loving one another is all virtue made perfect." Psychology as a discipline has its limits, but Dorotheos' vision transcends them because of his faith in humanity and in God.

## RECOMMENDED READINGS

Glasser, William. *Reality Therapy*. New York: Harper & Row, 1965.

Maslow, Abraham. *The Farther Reaches of Human Nature*. New York: Viking Press, 1971.

Rogers, Carl. *On Encounter Groups*. New York: Harper & Row, 1970.

Wheeler, Eric. *Dorotheos of Gaza, Discourses and Sayings*. Kalamazoo, Mich.: Cistercian Publications, 1977.



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## Book Review

*Christian Life Patterns: The Psychological Challenges and Religious Invitations to Adult Life*, by Evelyn Eaton Whitehead and James D. Whitehead. Doubleday & Company, 1979. 216 pp., \$8.95.

DON SUTTON, S.J.

Many of *Human Development's* readers will already be familiar with either Gail Sheehy's *Passages* or Daniel Levinson's *Seasons of a Man's Life*, if not both. In *Christian Life Patterns*, we have a book that not only acknowledges these authors, but also goes beyond them in integrating the experience of life's changes and processes with the message of the Gospel. *Christian Life Patterns* is an excellent example of the integration of psychology and spirituality, of expressing the "motivating metaphors of the tradition" in contemporary images. It should have great appeal to those involved in spiritual direction and formation work (both initial and ongoing). Moreover, it would be difficult for a person to read this book (at least it was for this reviewer) without recognizing himself and elements from his own life in the description that the authors present.

The book is well written and deserves a special accolade because it possesses a unity in style and tone that is sometimes lacking in jointly authored works. It is well documented without being pedantic. The richness and variety of its bibliography are certainly a welcome resource for anyone wishing to read further in any of a number of areas. Psychoanalyst Erik Erikson's theoretical concepts of psychosexual and social development are cogently presented and detailed enough to be helpful to those with little psychologic background, yet not so detailed as to be boring or cumbersome to the reader who possesses a greater familiarity with the primary sources.

The Whiteheads present some interesting,

stimulating, and consoling ideas on the topics of change, growth, and maturity, as well as the development of these issues especially in times of crisis. They examine, as segments along the developmental course, the periods of young adulthood, midyears, mature age, old age, and death. Their definition of health as "not so much a state to be achieved [as] . . . an effective mode of adaptation to the challenges of life," typifies the process-orientation of their approach and sets the stage for presenting a spirituality in which difficulties and crises are utilized for growth. One of their richest but simply expressed insights is: "Hidden in the challenges of psychological development are the agendas of a contemporary Christian spirituality."

The authors' definition of religious maturity is the "ability to be loving and generative, and to discover within the unexpected turns and crosses of adult life a meaning that is, at bottom, a gift." They consistently present Jesus Christ (or, at a bare minimum, some form of community) as the context or situation that should foster and support the individual at the time of a developmental crisis. They view maturity as the result of a happy balance between personal development and an awareness of the social context in which this occurs.

The writers' lapses are minor. For example, it is hardly original or necessary to claim that Paul's language is chauvinistic. On the other hand, their attempts to overcome sexual stereotypes ("the medical student imagines *herself* to be a doctor") should be applauded. Such reminders, however subtle, are helpful. The "Reflections," or exercises, that are provided for the reader at the beginning of each chapter are interesting and could probably be adapted for use in spiritual direction and formation work.

This is a book that offers a compelling and attractive spirituality and integrates psychology and religion without denying the difficulty and pain involved in the process of becoming fully human and fully Christian. It presents the tension involved in the "dialectic of control and letting go," the value of renunciation and self-abandonment in healthy growth and development, and the acceptance of a person's own finiteness and limitations ("Maturity occurs in the appreciation of the 'fit' of the limitations" in a person's life choices). For the authors, maturity is a "fragile strength" that is best described in the paradoxical statement of the Gospel, "Unless a grain of wheat falls into the earth and dies, it remains alone; but if it dies, it bears much fruit." (John 12:24)

This is a book that will reward its readers for the time and thought they give to reading and applying it.

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Coming up in *Human Development*

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**The Difficult Art of Confrontation**



**The Fundamental Importance of Self-Esteem**



**Dealing with Anger and Hostility**



**Homosexuality in Religious Communities**



**Coping with Guilt, Shame, and Shyness**



**Is Intimacy a Prerequisite for Maturity?**



**Distinguishing Between Spiritual Desolation and Depression**



**When and How to Refer for Professional Help**



**The Attributes of an Effective Helper**



**Celibate Anxiety**



## A Status Report on the Jesuit Educational Center for Human Development

**T**he publication of **Human Development** is the fulfillment of the first phase of a three-stage plan. It is designed to provide relevant information from the fields of psychology, psychiatry, and medicine to persons engaged in work involving leadership, religious formation, and spiritual direction. This summer issue exemplifies the diversity of topics we intend to cover regularly, along with an ongoing, experience-sharing dialogue with our worldwide readership. The nearly 4,000 subscribers who have already demonstrated their support for our project have guaranteed that **Human Development** is here to stay and grow.

The second and third phases still lie ahead, and we are extremely anxious to accomplish them. Phase II will involve an extensive series of workshops and courses for religious persons in various places throughout the world where the need for in-person, team-directed, and comprehensive discussion of the types of topics **Human Development** explores is great. We are already arranging for such events in Indonesia, India, Africa, and South America, and our deepest desire is to make as significant a contribution as possible to the efforts of people living and working for the Lord in Third World countries.

The third phase of our project will entail the establishment of a center where those involved as church leaders, religious superiors, formation staff members, and spiritual directors can obtain psychologic and psychiatric consultation—in person or by phone—from thoroughly trained and experienced clinicians. It is our sincere hope that these latter two phases will be accomplished during the next calendar year and that we will be able to announce their availability in the near future.

What we still need—and pray for daily—to accomplish phases II and III, and to make possible the regular delivery of **Human Development** to the thousands of Third World religious persons who are in need of our help, is financial aid from philanthropic foundations. We would be deeply grateful if our readers would acquaint the officers of foundations concerned about religion, health, and human development with our plan and our need for assistance, or let us know whom we might contact to further our close-to-fulfillment apostolic dream. As we stated frankly in our spring issue, "Human Development Needs You."

Gratefully yours,  
James J. Gill, S.J., M.D.